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# THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE



*The philosophy of love.*



*By the same Author*

THE FUTURE OF POETRY  
BROWNING AND MODERN THOUGHT  
SELECTED POEMS  
THE FACE OF TRUTH  
FOUR WORDS AND OTHER POEMS  
THE MASTER BUILDERS

THE  
PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

by  
DALLAS KENMARE

"Beyond yourselves ye shall love one day: then *learn* first  
of all to love."

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, *Thus spake Zarathustra*.

"I cry: Love! Love! Love! happy, happy Love! free as  
the mountain wind!"

WILLIAM BLAKE, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*.

"The great god Eros to-day moves over us, shadowing our  
world with his wings, homeless awhile. A great God, searching  
for incarnation."

G. WILSON KNIGHT, *The Christian Renaissance*.

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“Eternity affirms the conception of an hour.”



*Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.*



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## INTRODUCTION

THERE is a deep-rooted disease slowly eating away the roots of man's being. What precisely is this disease, and what are its causes? The word disease (literally dis-ease) implies a condition of discomfort and disharmony. This means that, quite unconsciously perhaps, some of the vital laws governing life have been broken. We have as yet too little understanding to know exactly what these laws are, but though the door to this essential knowledge is closed it is not locked, and for some people it even stands ajar. We look for the day when it will be flung wide for the light to stream through.

It is evident that disease is linked up in some way with sin—"Behold, thou art made whole; *sin* no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee."<sup>1</sup> This, however, should not be taken to mean that illness is necessarily a *punishment* for sin. "Sin," in the deepest meaning of the word, covers a vast field, and the connection is subtle and profound.

For prophetic religion, sin lies in a breach of the God-ordained order of moral values, in a revolt against God's holy will,

Heiler says in his great study *Prayer*. The revolt against, in short the utter ignorance of the meaning of, God's will is so widespread in the modern world

<sup>1</sup> Gospel according to St. John v, 13.



that sin and its frequent accompaniment disease, are inevitably rife.

But man was made for perfection, therefore disease and sin cannot be a part of his high destiny. The power of evil constantly at war with the power of good demands every effort to overthrow it. It is necessary to go deep into the causes of our ills, to deal with the roots of the disease, not prescribe palliatives merely to alleviate the symptoms.

In a valuable book, *Man the Unknown*, the scientist Alexis Carrel investigates many of the possible causes of man's disease. His approach to the problem is as thorough as a liberal-minded contemporary scientist can ensure. If matter predominates, as it appears to in his approach, yet the incalculable elements in the human make-up are by no means ignored. Indeed, the chapter on "Mental Activities" shows considerable enlightenment, and an approach to the many involved aspects all the sounder for being rationalistic and scientific. From the outset Carrel deplores the development of the materialistic values to the exclusion of the spiritual, and believes that herein lies the peril that besets modern civilisation. Progress has been along lines that can only lead to destruction, because the true values have been ignored. This is also the view consistently and continuously propounded by the great contemporary philosopher, Nicolas Berdyaev, and briefly and trenchantly expressed in *The Fate of Man in the Modern World*. Count Hermann Keyserling insists on a similar explanation of our many evils. Our ignorance of the true laws is prodigious, and never has the need for understanding been more urgent. In spite of the valuable research and useful discoveries made by the infant science of psychology

in its various branches—psycho-analysis, psychiatry, psycho-therapy, analytical psychology, etc., we still know little or nothing of the mysteries of human personality. In his book *Creation and Evolution* General Smuts urges the need for a new branch of research, the study of personality, for which science he suggests the name Personology. The mind of man is still a dark and tangled forest no one has yet had the power to penetrate and explore. And as it were below, at an infinitely deeper and more mysterious level than the mind, lie the spirit and the soul. Possibly the clue to the secret is hidden here, and not in the mind at all, and it will be here that we begin to approach an understanding of Christ's miracles of healing.

Medical science has done much to alleviate physical suffering, but little or nothing has been discovered to assuage or cure mental, spiritual or emotional pain. The insanity figures given by Carrel are appalling evidence of this. Man continues to walk the earth a figure of mystery, unknown to his companions, unknown even to himself. "We see through a glass darkly." Those who boast of our advancement and prodigious progress are not the specialists, who know too well how minute is as yet the sum of all our vaunted knowledge.

The medical and scientific study of the last century has latterly, it is true, concerned itself more with mental aspects, which is a step in the right direction, but even so, the state of the world in the fourth decade of the twentieth century rather refutes the belief that either or both of the present approaches, the scientific-physical or the scientific-mental, are *in themselves* sufficient. There is a more comprehensive way.

We have physicians of the body and of the mind, we profess to have physicians of the soul,<sup>1</sup> but where are the physicians of the human heart? <sup>2</sup>

It remains for a new order of science to discover what proportion of physical illness has its origin in emotional distress and disaster. At present neither psycho-therapy nor spiritual healing has precisely the right approach; the one because of its preoccupation with the mind, the other because of its preoccupation with the spirit. But the emotions, although affecting both, have finally little relation to either.

A highly important line of research lies in attempting to establish connections between emotional difficulties and various organs of the body and their

<sup>1</sup> I use the word "profess" advisedly. Whereas it remains true that ministers of religion are *ideally* spiritual pastors, yet *in fact*, the exigencies of parochial life, involving various social activities, schemes to raise money, and so on, make such heavy demands on his time that the minister cannot embark on the study of, nor devote the time necessary to, the spiritual-psychological difficulties of his parishioners. His position is really similar to that of a doctor whose main activities were directed not to the healing of disease, but to social work connected with his calling, such as raising money for hospitals, medical research, etc.—in the medical profession a palpable impossibility, for while the doctor was so engaged, the patients would die. But a position which could not be tolerated here is accepted as inevitable by the Church. Which goes to prove the disastrous lack of understanding of man's spiritual needs. While the minister is occupied with "socials" and parish teas, suffering members of his flock look to suicide as a solution to their grievous spiritual and emotional problems. I am speaking of the Church of England. The Roman Catholic Church and the Society of Friends arrange these matters better.

<sup>2</sup> It is necessary here to formulate a definition of the words heart, soul, spirit, mind, as I use them in this book. Heart I take to be the seat of the emotions (using the word in the symbolic, not the physical, sense), soul is near to spirit, more spiritual than mind, yet compounded of emotion and aspiration, near in fact to the concept personality. Mind is intellect, the thinking, reasoning element, closely allied to the physical brain (as heart is both the physical organ and the seat of the emotions, so mind and brain may be allied). Spirit is highest and deepest of all: the level where man aspires to, and sometimes apprehends, God.

subsequent disease : the reason why *certain* organs are attacked, and precisely what form of emotional distress has preceded the illness. For example, love-emotions most frequently affect the heart and the throat ; less personal emotions, involving the soul—certain types of religious emotion—the lumbar regions ; what may be called intellectual emotion—severe mental conflict, perhaps at root erotic—causes nerve-tension in the forehead and may also affect the eyes, and many varying types of emotion affect the ears. But the difficulties in this kind of research are many and profound, primarily because of the innate embarrassment associated with the emotions, and secondly the general incapacity to face such situations honestly. Also there is a very common resistance to the suggestion that the body is really subservient to the mind. People are too apt to think that to trace their physical difficulties to “ mental ” origins is as good as to call them imaginary. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact that so much physical disease has its origin in the mind or the emotions by no means nullifies the reality of the physical condition.

One of the most significant factors in the phenomenon of disease is its connection with problems of love (psychologists would say “ sex,” but love and sex are by no means identical, as I intend this book to prove). Too little is understood of the true meaning of a word so often in our minds and on our lips. Human love, wrongly directed, becomes a powerful destructive force, breeding psychic, hence physical, poisons. In an essay on *Timon of Athens* in *The Wheel of Fire*, Professor Wilson Knight says :

The loss of love alone is responsible for all the ills that flesh endures (p. 245).



and my own conviction grows that, as I have said elsewhere,<sup>1</sup>

It would be safe to say that all our troubles originate in a misunderstanding of sex . . . and it is not an exaggeration to assert that, traced to its source, almost every human tragedy is a tragedy of love.

The emphasis is on the words "traced to its source." The connection is by no means always obvious.

Love is the supreme need of human life. Yet in spite of this fundamental truth, Eros is too often admitted to the mind only in disguise, fully recognised and accepted only by the few who have the enlightenment to realise his beauty and divinity. There is healing in his wings. The too-common secular view of the divinest of human emotions lies at the root of sin, suffering and disease, while, conversely, an understanding of its true nature brings health and joy.

<sup>1</sup> *Browning and Modern Thought*, pp. 48, 67.

## CHAPTER I

# LOVE AND DEATH

"Love is more great than we conceive, and death is the keeper of unknown redemptions."—FIONA MACLEOD.

THERE is throughout the cosmos the necessity for opposing forces : good and evil, light and darkness, spirit and matter, soul and body, and, in love, the spiritual and the carnal. An abstraction wrongs the whole. Death on the cross of matter is the necessary crucifixion in the flesh preceding the resurrection in the spirit. But this is no ghostly resurrection. It is indeed the resurrection of the body, glorified and sanctified, as the Body of Christ when He rose on the third day. He had descended into hell. He returned to earth glorified, and later ascended into heaven. So the complete human being must descend into hell, know the torment of carnal love, before rising to the understanding of the meaning of and necessity for the conflict. Then follows peace in earthly life, and in very fact an ascent into heaven. Hell is never the final answer. But "I speak of a mystery."

There is a love that leads to life, and a love that leads to death. D. H. Lawrence, perhaps the greatest of modern prophets, well apprehended the connection between love, emotional and spiritual needs, disease and death. In one of his last poems, *Healing*, he clearly affirms his belief that his disastrous illness is not physical in origin :

I am not a mechanism, an assembly of various sections,  
And it is not because the mechanism is working  
wrongly that I am ill.

I am ill because of wounds to the soul, to the deep  
emotional self,

and the wounds to the soul take a long, long time, only  
time can help,

and patience, and a certain difficult repentance,

long, difficult repentance, realisation of life's mistake  
and the freeing oneself

from the endless repetition of the mistake

which mankind at large has chosen to sanctify.

This passage demands close attention and thought. In it he makes several statements that go to the very roots of our human disorders. The wounds to the soul, to the deep emotional self, these are the wounds that produce physical illness. They make obvious physical symptoms a necessity, the only condition under which life is tolerable, because there is no general recognition, or understanding, of these deep emotional wounds. There is sympathy for the broken limb ; little or none for the broken heart. So a strong dual reason for physical illness arises : the necessity for a physical outlet for emotional pain, and the actual causation *by* emotional pain of physical disease and suffering. Both these causes operate in the unconscious ; only in comparatively rare instances is there deliberate and conscious desire for ill-health, although under stress of acute emotional pain the sufferer does sometimes consciously desire some obvious physical pain, as a respite from intolerable emotional suffering.

Also, the unconscious desire for illness may be linked up with the *need* for love, as when the unloved

child or the rejected lover seeks to win love through sympathy, stressing in many and various forms the fact of his pain, most commonly in the form of physical distress, since this is more readily acceptable and understandable. Often there is also a desire to rouse a sense of responsibility, and even shame, in the mind of the beloved, which might equally lead to a change of heart. It goes without saying that these subterfuges belong to an immature stage of development, yet they are only too common. Comparatively few people attain to true maturity, which unfortunate fact is largely responsible for the chaotic state of our civilisation. Psychologists affirm that the mental development of the average human being is arrested at the age of fifteen. Since we have tragic proof that the world is run almost entirely by mental adolescents, this dictum is not hard to accept. Carrel says :

. . . neither the body nor the soul can be investigated separately. . . . The mind is hidden within the living matter, completely neglected by physiologists and economists, almost unnoticed by physicians, and yet it is the most colossal power in the world. . . . We must have the courage to explore those regions of the self whose horizons, on every side, are shrouded in dense mist. . . . The entire body appears to be the substratum of mental and spiritual energies. . . . Man thinks, invents, suffers, admires and prays with his brain and all his organs.

Therefore it is clear that the wounds to the emotional self must cause suffering to the body, as to the mind. The mind grows confused, incapable of thought, the body lethargic, incapable of action, and disease ensues.



The human mind revolts at certain emotional disasters, certain tragedies of incompatibility. It was this tragedy that killed Keats, not, as has been too often supposed, the harshness of his reviewers, which could not have such a power. The great poet has vast resources of strength ; and a certain innate aloofness, allied to a conviction of the inevitability of his life and purpose, precludes unhealthy preoccupation with the opinions and abuse of his critics and antagonists. Criticism affects the mind only, whereas for the creative artist the vulnerable areas are the heart and the soul. I believe Mr. Middleton Murry, whose acute perceptions dive deeper into the essence of Keats's being than any other critic I know, comes near the final truth when he writes, in *Heaven and Earth*, of Keats's understanding of the divinity and self-surrender of love, and of Fanny Brawne's *incapacity* to grasp or really share this understanding. " So Keats sped like a comet to his death."

Much has been written of Keats's love, and too little understood, just as the cry, " Oh, for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts ! " has been widely misunderstood, mistaken for an indolent, oversensuous attitude, and, more often than not, misquoted too. Keats's meaning inevitably suffers through a divorce from its context, without which context the true meaning of a passage can never be discovered. It would often seem that the public really believes that isolated lines of various poets reveal their entire philosophy, as with Browning, whose reputation for optimism appears to rest on Pippa's lines : " God's in His heaven—all's right with the world." Whereas the truth is that to isolate the philosophy of any great artist is finally impossible. The general direction

and development of his life-work is evident to the thoughtful student, but the study of the personality and reactions of one poet alone would provide work for a life-time, and even then there would be little hope of success. Even Murry's penetrating, profound and deeply sympathetic studies of Keats still leave the essence of the personality unrevealed. The work itself, as with all poets, is the truest revelation.

In Keats's letters to Fanny Brawne, there is abundant evidence of the reasons why he "sped like a comet to his death." He died of consumption, consumed by his love, suffocated by the intangible frustration of his own capacity for passion and Fanny's irremediable lack. This, the emotional failure, far more than any physical frustration, was responsible for his end. Like the lover in Fiona Macleod's profound and mysterious tale *The Distant Country*, he "loved beyond the reach of his fate." When he writes :

I see *life* in nothing but the certainty of your love  
—convince me of it my sweetest. If I am not  
somehow convinced I shall die of agony

he is not using idle words. In the same letter he reveals, not for the first time, his conception of love, a conception quite evidently foreign to Fanny Brawne :

If we love we must not live as other men and  
women do . . . you must be mine to die upon  
the rack if I want you. . . .

and again :

My recovery of bodily health will be of no benefit  
to me if you are not all mine when I am well.  
For God's sake save me—or tell me my passion  
is of too awful a nature for you.

“ If we love we must not live as other men and women do.” Love was for him a vocation, to which he was dedicated priest. The “ awfulness ” of his passion was only too real : it was a passion too intense perhaps for earthly life ; indeed, it was full of awe. He demanded, as the great poet inevitably must, perfection. The realisation that the girl he adored could never approach that perfection tortured him quite literally to death. He was asking too much of her : he demanded of her that which the limitations of her nature made it impossible for her to give. She was not to blame. No one was to blame :

. . . in tragic life, God wot,  
No villain need be, passions spin the plot,  
We are betrayed by what is false within.<sup>1</sup>

His acute perception made him realise this, yet the realisation could not cure his passion. There was the conflict and the torment. He recognised the fundamental lightness in her, which contrasted agonisingly with his own depth and intensity.

I am literally worn to death, *which seems my only recourse*.<sup>2</sup> I cannot forget what has passed. What ? Nothing with a man of the world, but to me dreadful. When you were in the habit of flirting with Brown you would have left off, could your own heart have felt one half of the pang mine did. . . . How have you passed this month ? Whom have you smiled with ? All this may seem savage in me. You do not feel as I do—you do not know what it is to love. . . . For myself I have been a martyr the whole time, and for this reason I speak : the confession is

<sup>1</sup> George Meredith, *Modern Love*.

<sup>2</sup> The *italics* are mine.

forced from me. I appeal to you by the blood of that Christ you believe in : Do not write to me if you have done anything this month which it would have pained me to have seen. I cannot live without you, and not only you, but chaste you, virtuous you.<sup>1</sup> Be serious ! Love is not a plaything—and again, do not write unless you can do it with a crystal conscience.

This is not common jealousy, though superficially there may seem to be a similarity. It is akin to the tragic passion of Othello. Keats, born to be a great lover, knows that flirtation debases and profanes the emotion which is to him sacramental. Few are born with this conception of love : those few are love's destined martyrs. From their earliest years they instinctively embrace only the highest and deepest in human emotion. When Keats says, "You do not know what love is," he speaks truth, because he adds "you do not feel as I do." From his view, she does not know what love is, but, it must be clearly understood, through no fault of her own. She cannot. There lies the pitiful tragedy. To him, love is a surrender of the whole self, there can be no compromise. Thus, Fanny Brawne did not know what it was to love. And nothing is more disastrous between

<sup>1</sup> Keats's use of the word chaste here would not mean physical chastity. There is little reason to suppose that a respectable young lady like Fanny Brawne would be in any such danger. Keats means the poet's conception of chastity : purity in quintessence, purity of heart, crystal clarity of soul, a complete dedication to the sacred emotion of love. A flirtation which to a "man of the world" would be a trivial matter would be to Keats a desecration, a gross impurity. It would be vain to argue that he might have modified an attitude many would condemn as disproportionate : the saint cannot modify his conception of and attitude to God, nor can a lover of Keats's stature modify his conception of love.



lovers than a misunderstanding, a widely diverging conception, of love. The tragic efforts at explanation where there can be no explanation set the final seal on what can only prove to be calamity. For perfection in love a similar approach, a similar fundamental conception, is the first essential.

When in another letter Keats wrote :

I have been astonished that men could die for religion—I have shuddered at it. I shudder no more—I could be martyred for my religion.  
( Love is my religion )—I could die for that,

he was stating the precise truth. Love was the only religion he knew. And because it was his religion, he inevitably saw any light approach to it as blasphemy, the sin against the Holy Ghost. So he died a martyr for his faith. He found himself in the intolerable situation of loving a woman fundamentally incapable of approximating to his ideal. “ I cannot live without you ” (that he knew too well), “ and not only you, but *chaste you, virtuous you.*” He could not live without her, yet he could not live with her *unless* he was convinced of her absolute integrity, her complete fidelity to his own conception of love. And this he knew was impossible. Clearly there was no solution but death to so pitiful and complex a conflict. In one of his last letters to his friend Charles Brown he confesses :

The very thing I want to live for most will be a great occasion of my death. I cannot help it. Who can help it? Were I in health it would make me ill, and how can I bear it in my state?  
. . . I wish for death every day and night to deliver me from these pains . . .

and again :

My dear Brown, what am I to do ? Where can I look for consolation or ease ? If I had any chance of recovery, this passion would kill me.) *John Brown*

Is there any need for further evidence ? The nature and quality of certain conflicts inevitably leads to death, the only solution. In certain kinds of love the seeds of death are inherent. To the majority of men, Keats's love must seem inexplicable ; even Coventry Patmore, a poet deeply concerned with the metaphysics of love, could not understand Keats : he so little understood that he confused this passion, actually the quintessence of purity, with lust. He " could find nothing in these letters that deserves a much better name than lust." He should have sought in Keats's poetry for the answer to this accusation : there, and there only, is the writer's quintessential self revealed. The rest is " . . . but sound and reek, a mist round the glow of Heaven." And in this connection it might rather easily be suggested that Patmore's own poetry, and his conception of love revealed there, savours faintly of an insidious type of spiritual lust, closely allied in essence to " nuptial mysticism," which is by no means the purest and best form of mysticism. The human and the divine are somewhat dangerously mingled : in certain mystical writings the erotic language tends to sully the approach to the divine, and also tarnishes the purity of earthly love whose language it borrows ; in Patmore's love-poetry the eroticism is subtly, and paradoxically, it would seem, corrupted by the mystical element. Human love is the gateway to divinity, but not divinity itself. It is vital to appreciate the essential differences.

Thus Keats's love is the purer for being wholeheartedly human.

He says : " I cannot help it. Who can help it ? " There is indeed no blame. The tragedy arises through his pre-destination as great lover and great poet. Such are unfit for life in the world, yet they are necessary to the world, the torch-bearers, themselves continually seared by the torch's flame, lighting the way to the final inevitable, though still distant, redemption. They are martyrs to the purpose they have no choice but to serve. Saving others, they cannot save themselves.

Possibly it was because of the all-absorbing nature of his own religion of love that Keats felt no need of the Christian religion. And possibly had he lived longer, until the maturer years when the need of passionate personal love grows less and the need for *life in itself*—pure life, divorced from personal emotion, grows increasingly stronger, he would have become a great Christian. But he died, as he instinctively knew he well might, a martyr for human love.

D. H. Lawrence, staggering under the prophet's burden, understood many profound truths hidden as yet from the mass of men. In his letters as in his poetry he constantly refers—as in the poem " Healing " already quoted—to his physical ills arising from the deeper spiritual and emotional sources :

It was the evil influence of aggregate London that made me ill : suddenly I start to be sick. It is all very vile. . . . Then just as suddenly . . . my soul inspired itself and I got well. . . . If one could have a real fresh hopeful spirit, one would be well in health.

Only the living heart and the creative spirit matter—*nothing else*.

Frequently he mentions the sense of “suffocation” arising from spiritual and emotional suffering. Eventually the suffocation culminated in lung disease, which caused his death.

Lawrence was something more than a man: he was a prototype of Man, in his highest moments revealing the richest potentialities of humanity, and in his lowest the profoundest tragic depths to which man can sink. In him the saint and the sinner battled fiercely for domination: the dove and the serpent impossibly mated and gave birth to his beloved phoenix, the symbolical bird rising from the ashes of death upon death, rising again and again, after the flames of every type of passion—human, sub-human, super-human, almost god-like—had consumed the ever-changing self. The death and resurrection theme was continuous, and, as a result, the persistent passion for change and “newness,” the need to cast off wholly the old, dead self and begin a new life clear of all the old associations, to go out “on a new morning, a new man.” Hence his perpetual hunger for travel, for new worlds. Concurrently with the passion for newness ran the desire for oblivion:

My soul has had a long, hard day  
she is tired,  
she is seeking her oblivion.

O, and in the world  
there is no place for the soul to find her oblivion  
the after darkness of her peace,  
for man has killed the silence of the earth



and ravished all the peaceful oblivious places  
where the angels used to alight.<sup>1</sup> †

As in the physical world the value of the individual as such is subservient to his value to the race, and so must often be sacrificed for its good, so in the spiritual world the poets and the prophets are inevitably sacrifices offered for the redemption of humanity. They are therefore fitted to bear suffering in ways impossible to the average man, and called to experience suffering of a nature and quality equally impossible to him. Knowledge of the creative, and so redemptive, value of pain, and the realisation of its inevitability, powerfully increases resistance and endurance, can even at last make suffering desirable (not, masochistically, as an end in itself, but only and always as a means to an end). Beethoven in the final stage of his development fully understood this process—rebellion against, acceptance of, and at last a full welcoming of suffering, were the three stages in the artist's development, as he saw it. Yet sometimes there must be moments of exhaustion, when the burden seems too heavy, the pain too relentless and continuous, and there is the cry for release, for oblivion and peace. "My soul has had a long, hard day." This poem bears the imprint of Lawrence's unique type of consciousness: his kinship with the angels, with those who in the days of man's innocence still walked with the children of men. This may appear strange to those who think of him mainly as a sex-ridden prophet of "free love" (free in the wrong sense. Free love in the proper sense is infinitely difficult of attainment, yet without this perfect free-

<sup>1</sup> *Last Poems.*

dom no love is finally great) ↗ Even to begin to understand Lawrence's significance—and this, of course, applies to all important writers—the whole body of the work must be studied, and this demands a close and exhaustive study few readers are prepared to undertake. The profound student of Lawrence discovers something very different from the casual reader ✕

Like Shelley, it was as if Lawrence was forced, violently against his will, into a world where all innocence and deep understanding of life's laws has been lost, and he could never accustom himself to it. He had a knowledge, a vision of a regenerate world, essentially pure, essentially innocent. And the main body of his doctrine, the core of his revelation, was the regeneration of mankind through love. Here he is close in thought to Blake. Of necessity he was blinded by brightness, by the vivid, terrifyingly beautiful paradoxes of his subject. Like Shelley, he knew that only through a new understanding of the relationship between man and woman might a new race arise, a new kingdom, nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven, be built on earth. But, in common with all prophets, *how* this relationship was to be established he could not put into precise words. In his last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, he seeks to prove that this understanding can come only through pure sex, sex in itself, the physical relationship devoid of any qualifying attributes of mental, spiritual or even emotional communion. The result is utter gloom, a total impasse, a conclusive assurance of the ultimate futility of the physical relationship *per se*, and the whole quality of the book speaks not of freedom but of the heaviest sort of bondage. Lawrence is far

from being a safe prophet. His immense power lies in the sphere of æsthetics, never ethics.

Yet dazzlingly he saw this urgent need for regeneration. Some great step had to be taken. What was it? Again and again he wrote, in different words and in different contexts (and in writing of art he inevitably wrote of life) :

The only resourcing of art, revivifying it, is to make it more the joint work of man and woman. I think the *one* thing to do is, for men to have the courage to draw nearer to women . . . and for women to accept and admit men. That is the start—by bringing themselves together—revealing themselves each to the other, gaining great blind knowledge and suffering and joy, which it will take a big further lapse of civilisation to exploit and work out. Because the source of all life and knowledge is in man and woman, and the source of all living is in the interchange and the meeting and mingling of these two.<sup>1</sup>

When he wrote these words, Lawrence was a comparatively young man. In them, like Browning in *Pauline*, he was really foreshadowing the whole future development of his thought, and the meaning of his purpose. As with Blake, his unique intuition, and his desire to lead men to understand it, involved long and detailed exploration of the elements of life most evilly degraded, of the roots of life and of creation, in other words, of sex. Blake, as Middleton Murry points out,

understands that the fatal doctrine that Woman's Love is Sin has been the cause of the eighteen

<sup>1</sup> Letter to A. D. McLeod.



hundred years of error and illusion, and that this is a corruption of the integral message of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Possibly because Blake's approach to all things was deeply religious, sacramental ("everything that lives is holy"), he, in strong opposition to Lawrence, is the *safe* prophet of sex.

Lawrence, in his horror and fear of the world he discovered around him, often turned instinctively to the symbols that took him to the sphere of his true being. Blake did this too, but he went further: he lived continuously with those symbols in that sphere; for him the outer world was the fiction, the inner the reality. Lawrence's symbols were angels, man in perfection, "the sons of God," and flowers. Few poets have written so exquisitely, with such delicacy, sensitivity and inner understanding, of flowers. And always he longed for men to attain to the beauty and natural purity of the flower-world:

Become aware as leaves are aware,  
and fine as flowers are fine. . . .

All I want of you, men and women,  
all I want of you  
is that you shall achieve your beauty  
as the flowers do.

Oh, leave off saying I want you to be savages.  
Tell me, is the gentian savage, at the top of its coarse  
stem?

Oh, what in you can answer to that blueness?

<sup>1</sup> William Blake, p. 107.

Tell me ! Tell me ! Is there in you a beauty to  
compare  
to the honeysuckle at evening now  
pouring out its breath ? <sup>1</sup>

By the time Lawrence was writing these, his last poems, pitiful in their nostalgia and supra-rational awareness, he had come bitterly to hate, and fiercely to fight, that world of men and women where he saw his vision so torn and degraded. He did not understand that hate, being itself evil, can never destroy evil. Perhaps in his earliest days, when the wide love for humanity dominated him, he apprehended this truth, but as the years passed the continual assaults on the ideal clouded the apprehension, and, like too many passionate idealists, he succumbed to hatred and vituperation.

He knew that the flesh must be understood in some new way, and, through understanding, sanctified. St. Paul put the matter more clearly when he spoke of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> But St. Paul's irrefutable experience, and the subsequent direction of his life, gave to his thinking a clarity and directness, to all his words an authority, forever denied to Lawrence. Also there was in Lawrence an indefinable, almost unhuman, quality, an intensity of feeling and perception, as if, again like Shelley, he were a nerve to feel much of the else unfelt, and this hypersensitivity gave to all his writing, even to simple nature writing, a feverish quality, a vivid eroticism and excitability. In his method of approach to

<sup>1</sup> *Last Poems*. "Flowers and Men."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Novalis: There is but one Temple in the Universe, and that is the Body of Man. Nothing is holier than this high form. We touch Heaven when we lay our hand on a human body.

sexual problems, his exaltation of the flesh defeats its own ends. This is most apparent in the novels. Inevitably, because the novel is concerned mainly with character and action, with the surfaces rather than with the profundities, and Lawrence, in common with every poet and prophet, lived uncomfortably in the world of actuality and everyday action. In that world, every step was likely to be a false one, so naturally, in writing of it he often stumbled. In his poetry he was on firm ground, finding there no uneasy dualisms.

Judged from one standpoint, that "art arouses no desires it does not in the same moment satisfy,"<sup>1</sup> Lawrence's novels fail. In the following passage from *The Rainbow*, for example, and in all the descriptions of Tom Brangwen's love for the Polish woman, there is a fierce, almost an abnormal, tensivity :

. . . as if a strong light were burning in him, and he was blind within it, unable to know anything except that this transfiguration burned between him and her, connecting them, like a secret power. . . . He went about in a daze, scarcely seeing the things he handled, drifting, quiescent, in a state of metamorphosis. He submitted himself to that which was happening to him, letting go his will, suffering the loss of himself, dormant always on the brink of ecstasy like a creature evolving to a new birth.

The awakening to love is ever the evolution of a new birth ; Lawrence knew divine secrets : this passage comes very near to an attempt to describe the "mystic experience" of the saints, and is the purer for remain-

<sup>1</sup> G. Wilson Knight, *The Christian Renaissance*, p. 305.

ing within its own sphere. Yet his manner of description, the strange mindless ecstasy, the quivering quality of tension, brings the reader, not to peace, not to the supersensuous, transcendent fulfilment of great art but to a state of nervousness, a stress and excitability until at last the book has to be laid aside.

This reaction plainly declares that Lawrence never fully learned his *craft* as a writer ; possibly his contempt for the intellect may have been partly responsible for this. He remained too much the artist *living in* his work, suffering and exulting in and with and through it, without the measure of detachment and objectivity, the winnowed purity, that marks the work of the greatest creative artists.

Throughout his writing life he was attempting the impossibly difficult : the incarnation of spirit through flesh, the torturing attempt to establish finally and for ever the mystic-material communion. This is seen clearly in almost all the love-passages in *The Rainbow*, until the effort and the stress, the constant sense of frustration, becomes an agony. In many of these passages there is an almost intolerable beauty :

. . . she felt him flying into the dark spaces of her flame, like a brand. . . . He held her in his arms, and his bones melted. The door of the loft was open. Outside, the rain slanted by in fine, steely, mysterious haste, emerging out of the gulf of darkness. . . .

Such fine simplicity, and such intensity, such *inevitable* choice of words (although, of course, there is no "choice," in the strict sense of the word : in writing of this nature the words come inevitably ; no rational thinking could produce the phrase "fine, steely,

mysterious haste," nor is there any rational explanation of the phrase "dark spaces of her flame." Such writing, like the best poetry, "writes itself"). Again, the description of the corn-harvest, the fields under the "hoary silver" of the moon, and their love-making there, the sense of their love irradiating every action, in gathering and setting down the sheaves, in their walking to and fro under the harvest moon, trembles on the sword-edge of a loveliness almost too poignant.

The ultimate, the natural, result and manifestation of this desire for communion is the fleshly symbol, the child. Unless a love-relationship is creative it has betrayed its purpose, denied the God of creation, without Whom there can be no love worthy of the name. The very essence, meaning and purpose of love is creativeness, although, as Nicolas Berdyaev, one of the greatest and most enlightened of modern prophetic writers, continually affirms, this creativeness need not necessarily be physical. Indeed, physical union may increase rather than assuage the sense of frustration. *In itself*, in isolation, divorced from the deeper creative love, it has no power, even if it prove physically productive, to satisfy the deep desire for ultimate communion. Naturally, for the mass of mankind love must be, and normally is, creative of physical life, yet there is another, it may even be a greater, form of love, uniting man and woman in a marriage perhaps more of heaven than of earth, which proves powerfully creative, but only on another plane: in work of a redemptive nature, either in art, in the spiritual life, or in various more obvious forms of work for humanity. This love, and the resultant creativeness, has not hitherto



been recognised or understood, as Berdyaev makes clear :

The problem of the meaning of that love which is the result neither of physical attraction nor of child-bearing nor yet of the social organisation of the human race is not even broached. Love by its nature occupies the same place as mysticism. . . . The revelation of the mystical and positive meaning of the love between man and woman is part of Christian problematics.<sup>1</sup>

Berdyaev, also, is deeply concerned with problems of love and sex, of a new understanding leading to an entirely new development and ultimately a new era, and he, again, is a *safe* prophet, perhaps the safest, clearer in his speech than Blake, all his thinking rooted in a deeply-realised vital renascent Christianity.

Human love is the earnest of divine love, a thought beautifully expressed by Mr. Middleton Murry in *Heaven and Earth* : “ Love is the divinely appointed means of our return to God during existence✱ It would seem that at birth we are separated from God : a fragment of the Eternal Principle, in order to fulfil some part of the divine plan, is as it were detached : the spirit, the breath of God, takes flesh, the miraculous body-case encloses it, and a human being is born into the world. Birth is therefore a sacred process. Indeed, the begetting and birth of a human life is so sacred that both conception and birth should be hallowed and sanctified. We are infinitely far from this understanding : this is one of the spiritual-physical laws most frequently broken, and with what tragic results it is not necessary to look far to observe.

<sup>1</sup> *Freedom and the Spirit*, p. 206.

It is interesting in this connection to speculate on the meaning of the words in the Book of Esdras II :

Let the multitude perish then, which was *born in vain*,<sup>1</sup> and let My grape be kept, and My plant, for with great labour have I made it perfect.

and compare with the passage in St. John's Gospel :

As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

How many human beings are born " not of the will of the flesh . . . but of God ? " In this thought may lie the answer to a vast problem. It is conceivable that all life is not of *equal* value.

At birth, for reasons we cannot understand, we are separated from God and must suffer this separation for the period of earthly life. But although the alienation is necessary, it is not complete (which is also true of separation in the deepest human relationships). The sense of God, of a union transcending the body, persists, and there is communion in separation. In the familiar words " God is love " the deepest significance lies. According to Plato, it was Eros who created the world. Yet it is still possible for man to deride, debase and so blaspheme the holiest aspect of human life. Thus it is that the dishonouring of love is the sin against the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of love and truth, well called the Comforter. Some few years ago a profound and startling prophetic book appeared<sup>2</sup> in which the Eros was directly equated

<sup>1</sup> The *italics* are mine.

<sup>2</sup> *The Christian Renaissance*, G. Wilson Knight.

with the Third Person of the Trinity. What then is the significance of the words "conceived by the Holy Ghost?" The Incarnation was an event unique in the world's history: once, and once only, perfect human love gave birth without physical impregnation *because that love was overshadowed by the Spirit of God*. The power of love is such that no miracle is impossible; miracles occur so rarely because human love habitually falls so pitifully short of perfection. "With God all things are possible." God is love; but *love in perfection*, not love as it is usually experienced and understood. The sense of the holy is not common in human love. From time to time certain thinkers have been quick to apprehend these truths, these transparent mysteries, but I am not aware that this particular solution to the "problem" of the Virgin Birth has been offered. And rather naturally, since love is of all emotions the most tragically misunderstood. Here, and here alone, lies the root of almost every disaster in human life.

Men and women are not creatures of clay, nor disembodied spirits, but things of fire intertwining in understanding, torrents leaping to join in a cascade of mutual ecstasy. There is nothing in life to compare with this uniting of minds and bodies in men and women who have laid aside hostility and fear and seek in love the fullest understanding of themselves and of the universe. . . . You must have in you the thought that is creation; life's spring, and the daring of its unconquered waters—so you may transform the world and people it with gods, who know no more the hates and littleness of men.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dora Russell, *Hypatia, or Woman and Knowledge*.

## II

Hermann Keyserling, in *Problems of Personal Life*, propounds a somewhat curious view of health :

In my opinion, there is only *one* reasonable and yet dignified attitude towards one's body and its accidents : that is to accept health and ill-health as equivalent facts and as alternatives equally devoid of value.

This is similar in essence to the ideal of detachment preached by many mystics and ascetics, but it does not accord with the inclusive ideal so well understood by the Greeks : the desire for a body worthy to house the soul, nor does it accord with the passionate belief of the spiritual healers of all time that the fair spirit must create the fair body, that an imperfect body is a betrayal of the life that is ultimately divine. Count Keyserling makes a rigid distinction between spirit and body, affirming that each operates on such a totally different plane that interplay is impossible. This is certainly partly true, as Berdyaev points out :

The reality of the spiritual world and of the divine do not correspond in any way to the reality of our sense-perceptions and our thoughts. The reality of the spiritual world and of God exist, not by virtue of any relationship or comparison with other things, but rather in their own right, as a reality of a different quality infinitely greater than the perceptions and thoughts of the world of psyche and the phenomena of the natural world.<sup>1</sup>

So, Keyserling argues, the body, and consequently the health or ill-health of the body, belonging to the

<sup>1</sup> *Freedom and the Spirit*, p. 10.

earthly, material plane alone, must therefore be considered and accepted solely on that plane. This is why, in the main, he urges indifference to all bodily events: they are too far removed from the vital plane of the spirit to be worthy of attention. Nevertheless, it remains indisputably true that the heart, soul and spirit do definitely affect the housing body. Every human being can from his own experience confirm this. And how can the vitality Keyserling continually demands and acclaims as one of the highest goods be achieved without abundant physical health? A vital spirit cannot express itself *fully* through an ailing body.<sup>1</sup> Ideally, man should always desire health and wholeness.

Keyserling repeatedly affirms that:

Man is not, in the last analysis, an essentially thinking but an essentially feeling being,

and it is in the feeling-life, the emotional life, that disease has its *origin*. The spirit is beyond health and disease, which is possibly what Keyserling is trying to convey. And though he may be profoundly right in separating *spirit* and body (these are mysteries that evade rigid definition), there is abundant physiological proof of the relations between the emotions and bodily disorders: for example, in the actions, reactions and interactions of the ductless glands.<sup>2</sup> It therefore seems more reasonable to accept Carrel's dictum that "man thinks, invents, loves, suffers, admires and prays with his brain and all his organs," the entire body being the substratum of mental and

<sup>1</sup> Although confirmed invalids do often manifest spiritual vitality and radiance, and are often powerfully creative: Elizabeth Barrett was an outstanding example.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Louis Berman, *The Personal Equation*.



emotional energies. Jung, also, constantly affirms the inter-relationship of body and spirit, speaking of

ML the mysterious truth that spirit is the living body seen from within, and the body the outer manifestation of the living spirit—*the two being really one*,<sup>1</sup>

and again :

all attempts to explain the psychic factor in terms of more elementary physical factors were doomed to failure. No glandular extract which will cure a neurosis has yet been found. . . . A suitable explanation or a comforting word to the patient may have something like a healing effect which may even influence the glandular secretions.<sup>2</sup>

The evidence of a doctor of such wide and deep experience, one whose life has been given to the study of psychology and the mysteries of man's inner being, pondering deeply on the infinite ramifications of the body-soul or body-mind relationship, may be said to be irrefutable, although Jung himself is the first to admit the difficulties and contradictions, the dangers of dogmatic assertions, inherent in so complex a subject.

The importance of the emotional life in, for example, all cases of disease and disorder in middle age—particularly in women, who are notoriously hyper-emotional—can scarcely be overrated. The common practice of dismissing their ills as wholly due to physical causes is too simple a solution. The truth is that the proportion of people whose emotional lives have been satisfying is pitifully small, and in middle age the

<sup>1</sup> The *italics* are mine.

<sup>2</sup> *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, pp. 253, 257-8.

realisation of insufficiency becomes acute, allied to the panic fear that there is now no hope of repairing the damage of the hollow years. The harm too often inflicted during the impressionable years of adolescence is largely responsible, and can be repaired only in rare cases, and then only through deep suffering and a relentlessly honest approach to all the problems.<sup>1</sup> Again, untold harm is done through the excessive importance attributed to sex *as an end in itself*, and in the general confusing of sex with love. There is obviously a sense in which they are one and indivisible, but also a very vital sense in which they are irreconcilable and alien. These contradictions are inherent in all profundities, and can in the first instance only be understood and resolved by certain thinkers especially fitted for the task, who may then help others to resolve them. The common confusion of thought ignores the multitudinous varieties and types of love possible to the human mind, the human heart and the human soul. The highest type of love touches the spirit, and, through the spirit, God. Properly understood, all love is sacred, and the lack of understanding of this great truth is also largely responsible for human tragedy. The highest, deepest love, known only rarely, is a holy mystery, and though its rich fruits may be seen, manifest in some of the greatest works of art, and in the lives of some of the saints, the divine tree bearing the fruit must be delicately and strongly guarded.

A recently published book by Dr. Iovetz-Terescenko<sup>2</sup> claims, in strong opposition to most modern belief,

<sup>1</sup> The tragic illness and death of Heinrich Heine, the great German lyric poet, is directly traceable to his disastrous first love experience.

<sup>2</sup> *Friendship-Love in Adolescence.*

that love is not necessarily a sexual phenomenon at all, and his book, dealing mainly with the romantic loves of adolescence, supports his theory with adequate proofs. He quotes from diaries of boys and girls between the ages of thirteen and sixteen and a half :

I am quite at a loss. I don't understand anything. Mother said : " You did the wrong thing when you said to Betty, ' I wish you were a boy.' That ought not even to have entered her head. The thing is that you must just be friends." I said that that was what I said, and that the bad thing was that every one had such an attitude towards these things. ✕

The love, as the boy instinctively knows, is innately pure, and his wisdom is irrefutable. It is the pollution of the world, the attitude of adults, that infects and tarnishes. Elsewhere he says :

I have changed very much in one thing since the time when I began to like girls ; everything bad is repugnant to me. I can't express it more clearly, but it has an immense influence *for good*. . . . We become *better*.

This conclusion is vitally important, and is proof of the redeeming power of love, and its idealistic nature. But these relationships, more delicately pure perhaps than any experience in later life, are not understood by disillusioned adults, and are thus inevitably damaged. The results are all too plain to see. Love's young wings are muddied and torn ; he must limp through life henceforth striving always to repair the injury. The damage to, and loss of, first love too frequently results in an unhappy marriage, the disillusioned acceptance of the second-best.



Dr. Tereschenko begins and ends his valuable book with the assertion that love and sex are not identical terms :

I submit . . . that Love is not a sexual phenomenon, and that there are two different factors working in man—the Sexual and Love (p. 267).

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of this conclusion.

There seems little doubt that the love-impulse in the adolescent is almost purely *romantic*, passionately idealistic, and only remotely, if at all, sexual. But a troubling, too often disastrous, confusion is soon aroused in the mind of the developing child, and the source of the distress lies, not in the child himself, but in the attitude of the adults around him. It is interesting to speculate on the development of love if it were allowed to remain untouched by worldly influences. In some personalities—for example, in the poet <sup>1</sup>—love is the whole environment of the inner being, the driving-force, the source of all inspiration and power. The poet's love in a certain sense remains *throughout his life* close akin to the romantic love of the adolescent, because of the inevitable link between love and beauty. He could remain content indefinitely with his own *ideal realisation*, the imaginative inner fulfilment, but too often the object of his love, and also his associates, usually ignorant of the significance and *quality* of love in the poet's life, precipitates a crisis, forces an issue, with pitiful, often tragic, results. This point is admirably made in a recent play about Beethoven, *Muted Strings*. Beethoven's love for

<sup>1</sup> I usually find it convenient to use the word "poet" to indicate the prototype of the creative artist.

Giulietta Guicciardi is of this idealistic nature ; it is a flower of the imagination, needing no blossoming in any sphere but the musician's mind ; yet to her, as to most people, love is not complex : it seems to her quite simply that Beethoven is " in love " with her, and to her mind, marriage is the obvious sequel. The suggestion horrifies the musician. He cannot explain that more than half of his " love " for the young girl is a passionate love of beauty, of youth, of the beauty of her youth, and of her as an incarnation of beauty and youth, far more than a desirable human being. To him she is a symbol, a temporal symbol of eternal beauty. She is naturally perplexed : such conceptions, such fine distinctions, are foreign to most minds, and only clear to the artist. The average man or woman would not wish to be loved as a symbol, even were the significance of this understood. The misunderstanding goes deep ; attempts at explanation breed deeper confusion. There is no solution, then, but separation. Giulietta is heart-broken, Beethoven baffled, for, to him, the position is crystal-clear. Naturally she cannot understand that for the artist the " action " relevant to the ideal conception can be almost indefinitely postponed ; it may never even occur at all, and must in any case never be hastened or forced : such complex relationships must be left free to develop as naturally and spontaneously and inevitably as the growth of the flower from the seed ; they are too close to the sphere of the spirit to tolerate rash interference from the wholly other plane of direct action and materialistic values. All this inevitably breeds tragedy in the life of the artist, too often tragedy also in the lives of those he loves. Too many " rash, intruding fools " rush

in where angels would hesitate to waft a wing, and almost invariably with pitiful, if not finally disastrous, results.

The creative artist alone—possibly because he, more than most men, shares in the creative Nature of God <sup>1</sup>—apprehends, even at moments comes near to understanding, the infinite varieties of emotion all roughly grouped under the one word “love.” It is to be suspected that those who attribute to every kind of love a sexual basis unwittingly betray their own hyper-sexuality.

Coventry Patmore, in his essay *Love and Poetry*, writes well on the subject of youthful love :

The whole of after-life depends very much upon how life's transient transfiguration in youth by love is subsequently regarded. . . . The greatest perversion of the poet's function is to falsify the memory of that transfiguration of the sense and to make light of its sacramental character. This character is instantly recognised by the unvitiated heart and apprehension of every youth and maiden ; but it is very easily forgotten and profaned by most, unless its sanctity is upheld by priests and poets.

The sanctity is certainly not likely to be upheld by the majority, for to them this crystalline, almost divine, love is a matter for jesting and even condemnation. And in most cases the damage thus inflicted has disastrous, even tragic, results. We need to look

<sup>1</sup> Though every man is of necessity *in his own way*, a creator : “ Tout homme crée sans le savoir, comme il respire, mais l'artiste se sent créer : son acte engage tout son être, sa peine bien-aimée le fortifie.” A good distinction between the unconscious creativeness of the average man and the conscious creativeness of the artist.



to the parents and teachers for the root-causes of divorce, of suicide, disease, and life-long suffering. The teaching and training of the young in the most delicate matter of love and sex should, ideally, be undertaken only by certain men and women especially fitted for, even dedicated to, the task. Certainly the present haphazard methods are not only inadequate, but pregnant with danger. The difficulty is that in so few of the parents and teachers is this particular "problem" satisfactorily resolved. Contrary to common belief, marriage, with its attendant sexual experience and possible parenthood, need not necessarily prove a road to wisdom; indeed, more wisdom may often be found among the unmarried with no sexual experience. Which is not altogether surprising. What is surprising is the notion that the physical act of love could be, in itself, capable of bestowing the gift of wisdom. Which also applies to parenthood. Here, as always, experience, *in itself*, has no power; the value lies only in what is created from the experience, which depends entirely on the individual.

I quote here from a novel by a writer who wishes to remain anonymous. The fears and emotions of the adolescent, in this case a girl of fifteen of the highly sensitive, creative artist type, I believe to be fairly typical:

It seemed that her love set her apart; she could not share in the light and flirtatious talk of the other girls. Love to her was nearer tragedy than comedy; it went too deep for easy words. . . . Love. . . . Life. . . . What did it all mean? What did her love for Dennis mean? She knew now beyond all doubt that she loved him; she no longer hid from the knowledge, could, in fact,

no longer hide, for she was pursued relentlessly by a force she both desired and dreaded. Every thought of Dennis burned with delight ; she lived only for his fairly infrequent letters, and her own replies to them. The rest of life, although often difficult and saddening, was unreal. And sometimes even her love seemed unreal too, too much a part of this strange mystery called life, to which she was quickly awakening. Sometimes she dreamed, sometimes she lived in a nightmare, stark with fears. The dream she called " love " ; the nightmare had as yet no name for her, but its name was sex. She loved Dennis, she longed only to be with him always, not only because of himself, but because of the vivid colour of life when he was near, because of the heightened meaning of everything, a difference in the sunlight, and a strange, magic quality in trees and flowers. Without this magic she could not live. . . . Yet sometimes she feared herself and the swift waves of feeling that engulfed her, and she was compelled in her vague child-mind to connect these terrifying onslaughts of feeling with the nightmare that had no name, that seized her when in the newspapers she saw references to " the unmarried mother." Even in church she could not escape ; the words " born of the Virgin Mary " brought at once the sick sense of perplexity and fear.

This extract vividly conveys the link between and the antinomy of love and sex. Indeed, the supreme mystery and paradox of earthly love lies in its intimate connection with, and independence of, sexuality, and

nowhere is this mystery more clearly revealed than in the love of the adolescent, and the love of the poet.<sup>1</sup>

My main contention here is that the future attitude of the individual to love is largely conditioned by his experience and treatment in adolescence. Much has been taught by psychologists about the importance of the *young* child, the necessity for careful and judicious treatment, but the problem of the adolescent has not been nearly so minutely studied. I further contend that it is always to the emotional life, and specifically to the love-life, that we must look for the causes of ill-health, general maladjustment and disease, and the resultant tragedies.

### III

In *Browning and Modern Thought* I have touched briefly on the love and death theme :

the concept of perfection and death is constant throughout poetry ; the two are inextricably linked in the human mind. . . . There is a deep-rooted conviction that life cannot embrace the perfect (p. 76).

This view is powerfully expressed in a drama by Villiers de l'Isle Adam, *Axel*, where the lovers deliberately choose death rather than risk the least betrayal of the perfection of their love :

*Axel* : The quality of our hope forbids us life on earth henceforth. What is there left for us to ask of this unhappy planet, save only pale reflections of such moments as these ? . . . After this, to accept life would be mere sacrilege against

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Browning and Modern Thought*, p. 182, et seq.

ourselves. . . . Fulfilment, perfect, real and absolute, lay in that moment's inward knowledge. . . . We have experienced the ideal moment. To attempt its recall day by day would simply be to run the risk of doing violence to its nature, of lessening its divine resemblance. And if, since it is a law of life, our ecstasy should presently abate . . . oh, let us not await that mournful hour !

He accepts as a " law of life " the certainty that their ecstasy cannot survive the onslaughts of time and change, a very common belief, because the imperfect is too generally believed to be of the very nature of life on earth. Again, a grave flaw lies in the conception of the momentary ecstasy of love *as an end in itself*, not as a means to an end, to a fuller, richer life created by the joy of the lovers. Joy, no less than suffering, is passionately creative, and love-ecstasy, rather than proving the end of love, should be a beginning, a prelude. " Love is greater than the lovers," but too few understand this profound truth. Hence also the dread in many highly sensitive human beings of the physical consummation : they believe it must involve the death of the ideal. Carrel speaks not only for scientists, but for many poets, many idealists, when he says :

(الحسنة مني)  
 { Love stimulates mind when it does not attain its object.) If Beatrice had been the mistress of Dante there would perhaps be no Divine Comedy. The great mystics often used the expressions of Solomon's Song.<sup>1</sup> It seems that their unas-

<sup>1</sup> But not for the reason Carrel supposes.



suaged sexual appetites urged them more forcibly along the path of renouncement.<sup>1</sup>

And Byron expressed these views in a cynical couplet :

Think you if Laura had been Petrarch's wife  
He would have written sonnets all his life ?

The theory is so generally accepted that it is strange that it has not occurred to creative thinkers to question it. Like most widely accepted notions, closer inspection soon proves its invalidity. There are many instances of great geniuses and mystics who were married and lived a life of normal sexual fulfilment. The great German mystic Jacob Boehme was married at the age of twenty, and lived a normal, uneventful married life. So did William Blake. And Bach, perhaps the greatest of composers, was married twice, and the father of an exceptionally large family of children. These are only three examples taken at random ; there are many, these occur immediately as among the more notable. And the Browning marriage is perhaps the best refutation of the theory that fulfilled love annihilates creativeness. It should rather be urged that the deepest, fullest human happiness (and it cannot be denied that this happiness, in its most perfect form, can only be known through a love-relationship), should, indeed must, be creative of the highest and best attainments, in art and in life.

Similarly, materialist philosophers and psychologists have sought to prove that the mystic experience cannot be other than a form of sex-aberration, " due," says Professor Leuba, " to perturbations of the sex functions consequent upon their repression." Again, it would be hard to apply this view to the many

<sup>1</sup> *Man the Unknown*, p. 140.

mystics who have lived a normal sexual life, where there could be no "unassuaged appetites." Dr. Forsyth in his study *Psychology and Religion* goes so far as to regard conversion as

essentially a phenomenon of adolescence, none other than the new tide of sexual feeling that accompanies puberty being checked in its usual course and deflected into religion.

This theory scarcely accords with the evidence given in Professor William James's famous work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, nor is it true. Clearly, here, as elsewhere, only the fullest and deepest understanding can provide an answer, and such understanding is wholly lacking in those psychologists who, possibly by reason of an inherent *incapacity* (for human beings are different in *kind*, not degree)<sup>1</sup> cannot accept the spiritual bases of human life. There is a sense in which spirit and matter are eternally divorced: certain experiences have no connection with matter and the physical: it cannot be said that "visionary experience" affects physical sight, the vision is "seen" in a way totally indefinable in physical terms, just as in certain other experiences involving "voices" no voice is "heard" with the physical ears. This is precisely what the materialist investigator

<sup>1</sup> Cf. P. D. Ouspensky, *Tertium Organum*, pp. 157-8. If we take men as we know them . . . men who seem to us similar and *equal*, and consider them from the standpoint of their difference in function, we shall see that in reality they are entirely different and that there is nothing in common between them. They are quite different beings, belonging to different categories, to different planes of the world, between which there are no bridges, no avenues at all. These men seem to us equal and similar because in most cases we see only the shadows of real facts. . . . When we shall begin to understand this, the general conception of *man* will take on a different meaning.

cannot understand, neither can he understand that, for obvious reasons—since there is no other method available—the mystic is compelled to use physical imagery to describe what in fact is in no sense physical. Therefore to connect mysticism and sexuality is palpably false,<sup>1</sup> and is due to a misunderstanding of the great truth that the spirit lives *by laws of its own*, not conditioned by the laws of the physical world. Matter can be, and is, impregnated by spirit, because spirit is infinitely more powerful, indeed omnipotent, and can therefore achieve the miraculous, but matter has finally no power over spirit, and functions in its own sphere alone. In the greatest artists, prophets, saints, the understanding of the power of spirit to transform, transfigure and redeem matter, to turn the instinctive energies, for example, in a new direction ; in other words, “to swing over certain powerful instincts from a destructive to a creative direction,”<sup>2</sup> inevitably prevails. This involves a conception of life as sacramental, always potentially capable of this impregnation by spirit which leads to the Kingdom of God on earth.

Mental creativeness, while intimately, it might almost be contended, *wholly*, dependent on the phenomenon of *love* is not dependent on *sexual love*. In both sexes, children are artistically creative long before puberty, and almost invariably creativeness persists into old age, not confined solely to the physically creative years. Goethe, Browning, Thomas Hardy, George Meredith, Leonardo da Vinci, W. B. Yeats, Robert Bridges, Bach, Verdi, are a few outstanding

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed exposition see T. Hywel Hughes, *The Philosophic Basis of Mysticism*.

<sup>2</sup> G. Wilson Knight, *The Burning Oracle*, p. 273.

examples which come immediately to mind. Among women, the French poet Marcelline Desbordes-Valmore produced some of her best work in old age, and was writing until she died at the age of about seventy. Sarah Bernhardt and Rosa Bonheur worked indefatigably in old age. In fact, the fear of age, and importance given to youth, is almost entirely due to the overstressing of the sex element. The familiar phrase "the best years of life" actually means no more and no less than the years during which the sexual powers are at their height. Those who live by the deeper values honour the later years as the years of wisdom. The ideal is to assess the place of sex equitably, neither over-stressing nor under-rating its importance and significance.<sup>1</sup> It is vital to realise that *sex in itself*, in isolation, has no power either to increase or diminish creativeness, nor has it the power to solve any of humanity's profoundest problems. How do the Freudian school explain the fact that there is no less spiritual, mental and emotional torment among the sexually satisfied than the sex-frustrated? Yet everywhere the same theory is unthinkably accepted, as for example in Mr. Philip

<sup>1</sup> Jung in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* says: I do not mean to deny the importance of sexuality in psychic life . . . what I seek is to set bounds to the rampant terminology of sex which threatens to vitiate all discussion of the human psyche; I wish to put sexuality in its proper place. Commonsense will always return to the fact that sexuality is only one of the life-instincts—only one of the psycho-physiological functions, though one that is without doubt very far-reaching and important—p. 138.

In this statement he is supported by D. H. Lawrence in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, pp. 13, 14, 15: We are bound to admit that into all human relationships, particularly adult human relationships, a large element of sex enters. . . . But . . . all is *not* sex. And a sexual motive is *not* to be attributed to all human activities. . . . The essentially religious or creative motive is the first motive for all human activity. The sexual motive comes second.



Henderson's essay on Gerard Manley Hopkins in *The Poet and Society* when he remarks that Hopkins

knew very well that the rank healthy male in Whitman was quite capable of giving this lamenting girl (the speaker in *The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo*) a short and practical answer to all the nostalgic regrets for the golden echo of passing beauty (p. 104).

It happens, however, that the "short and practical answer" is no cure for nostalgic regrets. The body has no power to cure the soul; it can only provide anodynes. If it could cure, why should an avowed "sensualist" like Whitman himself write poetry, and not always the virile, sensual poetry of the "rank healthy male," but sometimes the poetry of nostalgia, of search? The roots of poetry, of art, lie elsewhere. What is essential to mental creativeness, and what can give as satisfying an answer to nostalgia as anything, during the period of earthly life, are what Keyserling has called "the passions of the soul," which need not *necessarily* be divorced from bodily passion, though they frequently may be. And the outward circumstances of such passions, though they may be of interest, are of small importance compared with their fruits. And it is impossible to overstress the vital importance of creativeness. In *Problems of Personal Life* Keyserling says :

In order to reach that fullness of life which neither leisure nor work in themselves can give, there is only one means that holds good for each and all : it is the stressing of creativeness as the supreme vital value, and the ordering of life in such a way that all activities should be inspired by its spirit.

. . . For more than a century already, the ideal of creativeness, which I consider superior to all the ideals which have ever been the lode-stars of mankind, has been proclaimed, under one form and another, by solitary thinkers and poets. Quite recently Nicolas Berdyaev, that great religious spirit . . . has gone even further than the Christian tradition by affirming that the man of genius is a revelation of the divine as much as the saint.

These are truths that cannot be too strongly or too frequently affirmed. The ultimate high destiny of man lies in co-operation with God, the Creator : in other words, in *creativeness*. Love should be regarded as a means to this end. ¶ There would be less disaster in marriage if lovers were to look upon their love in this way, as a contribution to life, not as a mere personal fulfilment and satisfaction. There would be less disaster in life if young people were taught to look first and foremost for their *purpose*, for their own unique contribution, to consider this of primary importance, to desire a life of altruistic giving, of service and usefulness. ¶ The whole complex tangle of love, of the emotional life generally, would then fall into place. Strongly creative people always affirm the incalculable value of work, acclaiming it as the justification, the ratification, of all human pain, the way to salvation and peace. Work, rather than being the curse of mankind, is really man's greatest boon. Idleness, lack of purpose and interest, kills, never work. Breakdown from over-work is not possible ; the cause of breakdown is over-worry. ¶ The ability to work to his maximum capacity with a leisured,



ardent mind and a tranquil, passionate spirit is the mark of the great man, and an ideal to be pursued by all men. Dr. Hadfield, in a valuable little book, *The Psychology of Power*, stresses the vast resources of power that wait to be tapped, and can be through a proper understanding of the laws governing life. Usually, man works more at the minimum than the maximum of his capacity, and almost always through lack of *mental control* (I myself would prefer to call it emotional control, but mental is the word in common use. Finally, the emotions are more energy-sapping than the mind, *unless* rightly understood and controlled).

In a perfect society every man would recognise his individual purpose ;<sup>1</sup> there would be no misfits ; the suitability of every individual would be carefully considered, and vast sources of power released. This is the excellent aim of vocational psychology, but, as with every human problem—and this cannot be too frequently asserted—unless the aim is related to a solid Christian background it must ultimately fail. Civilisation is dying of starvation, and until the true values are recovered there can be no revival, and no progress. The reason every attempt at world-improvement, every branch of progress has hitherto failed is precisely because of the neglect of these vital values, this one essential background. The motive underlying human action has never been single-minded and pure. No attention is paid to the vital fundamental issues. As I have said elsewhere<sup>2</sup> one day it must be recognised that world-problems are psychological and

<sup>1</sup> It is gratifying to see that the churches included in their manifesto of Christmas, 1940, the clause : The sense of a Divine vocation must be restored to man's daily life.

<sup>2</sup> *The Master Builders*, p. 21.

spiritual ; nations are composed of individuals, and, as Christianity has always known, the individual is of primary importance ; general salvation can only come through particular salvation. Mass-movements are too emotional to be permanent ; there can be no hope for the world until every individual is prepared to discover his own unique aspect of truth, to understand that " no man liveth to himself," that with his own personal joys and sorrows are bound up the well-being of suffering of the whole of society ; he is either a plague-spot spreading infection or a magnet radiating and attracting vital life-essences. But first he must have courage—far more courage than is necessary to submit to the mighty mass-movements, where mob-emotions remove the *responsibility* of individual feeling—courage to face himself, his needs, his failures, the deep and genuine reasons for his sense of frustration and failure. Psychology will help in this painful process, but more than psychology is needed to re-integrate the self which honest introspection has disintegrated. The lack of a Christian foundation explains the wreck and ruin of modern lives, and so of modern life. Men have been trying to live on a death-philosophy, a plain contradiction in terms. All that leads to life is good ; all that leads to death is evil. So whence the continued equating of love (life) with death ? The Holy Spirit is the " Lord and Giver of *Life* " ; God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, are life, never death essences. Yet

Man feels that Love is akin to Death ; in the moment of supreme bliss he is ready to perish. And the sinister idea that Love is a sin, a tremendous guilt for which one will have to pay the

penalty, springs from the same instinct. "The majority of creatures," writes Maeterlinck, "have the dim feeling that a very uncertain chance, a kind of transparent membrane, separates Love from Death, and that the secret idea of Nature wills that we should die at the moment when we transmit life."<sup>1</sup>

Always man suspects that

in love there is a necessary fiction not to be actualised, or, if actualised, fatal, or, maybe, enjoyed in death; perfect love on earth being a self-annihilating paradox.<sup>2</sup>

This belief, or rather, lack of *belief*, or rather, faith, is precisely similar to the common assertion that the Kingdom of Heaven is not for this world. But *because* Jesus said "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" it certainly can and does exist here and now, in individual human souls. So also with love. Perfect love can and does exist on earth, leading always to life, life of a fullness and richness otherwise undreamed. It exists so rarely *only* because of the prevailing lack of faith in so high a value. The Kingdom of Heaven exists so sparsely for the same reason. The world has agreed to live on negative values. Fear of evil gives evil all its power. Faith in good would give goodness an equal, indeed an infinitely greater, power, but fear of evil is rampant, faith in good feeble and sporadic. In Galilee Jesus could work no miracle "because of their unbelief."

Again in *The Christian Renaissance* Mr. Knight writes :

<sup>1</sup> Hermann Keyserling, *Immortality*, p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> G. Wilson Knight, *Lyly* in *The Review of English Studies*, April, 1939.

To Cleopatra death is as her own life-experience of love and Antony ; she goes, so to speak, to find union with the best she has experienced.

. . . Similarly Keats wishes to die during the nightingale's music, to dissolve into it, and again imagines himself dying while enjoying a perfect love-union in his " Bright Star " sonnet. A high life-experience may well seem to find perpetuation most easily if synchronised with death. . . .  
(p. 272.)

And in the essay on " The Philosophy of Troilus and Cressida " in *The Wheel of Fire* the same thought is expanded, in various forms :

the mystic apprehension of romantic love cannot be perfectly bodied into symbols of sex throughout a life-time (p. 71).

Troilus is throughout half-conscious of the fact that his love is destined to disaster in the world of flesh : it is a spiritual and delicate thing incapable of continued expression and satisfaction among the rough chaotic and temporal symbols of actuality (p. 74).

In a sense, the tragedy of Troilus surpasses the more apparent tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra, since the loss of love through life is a deeper disaster than loss through death. It is this very fear of loss through the incalculable forces of life that tempts the lover's mind with death-desires. Count Keyserling's speculations on death as a necessary factor in the lives of men of genius is apposite<sup>1</sup> : just as the value of a great man's work is rarely appreciated until after his death, when immediately the transforming power of the fact *that*

<sup>1</sup> *Immortality*, Chapter II, 4.

*he has died* produces an equitable assessment, and very soon an idealisation of his personality, so \a love-tragedy rounded off by death is more satisfying than a love-experience harshly severed by life, mainly because of the resultant idealising possibilities. \ The finality of death is more acceptable than the torturing uncertainty of life. \ In *Troilus and Cressida*

the creating mind of the poet seems to have been obsessed . . . by the concept of time (p. 73)  
 . . . the arch-enemy that kills values (p. 71).<sup>1</sup>

a concept and a fear powerfully expressed throughout Shakespeare's Sonnets, and crystallised in the lines from Sonnet LXIV :

Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate—  
 That Time will come and take my love away.  
 This thought is as a death, which cannot choose  
 But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

But it may well be argued that such dread infects only *romantic* love, itself ever involved with the fleeting elements of youth, youthful beauty, and the delights of the senses, which kind of love certainly and inevitably is "bodied into symbols of sex." The deepest love—rarely attained because only rarely desired and all too rarely believed in—being of its nature timeless could not know the tormenting thoughts of Time's changes and decays. \ The soul knows boundaries neither of time nor of space \ Physical love, romantic love (*in a sense* so near as to be almost identical), are conditioned by the temporal ; not so the "passions of the soul," which transcend, while including, the love of the body and the heart, just as universal love, divine

<sup>1</sup> *The Wheel of Fire.*



love (Agapé) transcends while including human love (Eros).

{ Certainly to continue to live after a high life-experience is more difficult than to die.<sup>1</sup> } But it is not wholly impossible so to embody, so to enclose, embed in the self such an experience that thereby life is permanently enriched, certainly transfigured. To perpetuate the experience in life, not death, is the highest, because the most difficult, achievement. There may be no "action" directly relevant, or approaching in intensity to, the experience ; in certain experiences of a clearly "transcendental" nature there may indeed be no adequate expression in actuality ; the generating passion must then be expressed *through life as a whole*. Life alone is vast enough to contain it, for "life is greater even than love."

In Mr. Charles Morgan's novel *Sparkenbroke* the love and death theme is primary, and the protagonist, the poet Sparkenbroke, so preoccupied with the belief that love in perfection must be equated with death that the great work he is engaged on is very fittingly a variation on the story of Tristan and Isolde, who, in his version of the legend, choose, at the very moment of love-union and ecstasy, death through the piercing of a poisoned jewel. There is throughout *Sparkenbroke* a vivid, somewhat febrile, sense of frustration, a sense of the incompleteness of all earthly fulfilment, which is found in Lawrence's love-stories also (although the *quality* of the portrayal is poles apart). In Mr. Morgan's story this sense is aptly symbolised by the continued delaying of the physical fulfilment of Piers Sparkenbroke's love for Mary. Repeatedly the moment of consummation is upon them, only to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Browning and Modern Thought*, p. 75, et seq.



be almost passionately rejected. The effect is akin to the prolonged yearning and reaching-out of the *Liebestod* in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, the music incessantly moving towards a climax, and then withdrawing before the climax is reached, although at long last there is a powerful moment of consummation, and the goal—the love-death goal—is reached. It seems as if throughout Piers Sparkenbroke (like *Troilus* indeed) is convinced that his love is of such a nature that physical fulfilment cannot bring him satisfaction, which would account for the death-desire, the belief that only in death can he find such transcendental relief. The same idea occurs in such widely varying contexts as Dennis Johnston's play, *A Bride for the Unicorn*, and the beautiful ballet, *Apparitions*, where in both instances the poet and the thinker, after life-long search, find ideal love only in death. And in Fiona Macleod's famous drama *The Immortal Hour* only "the dream of death" remains for Eochaidh when he has lost on earth "the joy that is more great than joy the beauty of the old green earth can give." He, too, sought perfect love, striving through union with an immortal, a princess of the Hidden People, to establish the mystic-material communion that lies at the core of all deep human love. "A king of men has wooed the immortal hour." But the immortal fulfilment, symbolised in his bride Etain, evades him: they are wedded, yet still apart; the union of the flesh has brought the union of soul and spirit no nearer, she is lured back to her immortal world "where no age is, nor any sorrow," earthly love cannot hold her, and death claims the stricken king.

Rilke also believed that "every ultimate love is only able to reach the loved one in the infinite." He

saw love as an extension of human life into the infinite, comparable in this sense with death, and believed that therefore its passion and hunger cannot, indeed should not, be satisfied by its object. It can find fulfilment only in "the Whole," of which earthly life is but a part.

But there is another way of life ; death is not the ultimate answer.<sup>1</sup> The highest love must be creative of life ; it cannot lead to death. And perhaps if it were understood that the search for perfect love on earth, like the search for God, in itself implies the possibility of fulfilment, there would be no more tragedies of frustration. "Thou wouldst not have sought me if thou hadst not already found Me." But not every lover is aware of, or desirous of, this supra-human fulfilment ; for those who are, most surely the fulfilment is inevitable. But because this love is mystical, there is danger if the quest is pursued with passionate urgency and impatience. God reveals Himself when the mind, the senses, are quiescent, when the heart has ceased to storm and the soul to *demand* peace. So with the love that climbs the stars and returns with glimpses of heaven.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. P. D. Ouspensky, *A New Model of the Universe*, p. 531. Poets have always been aware of . . . the irresistible force which attracts inwardly related types to one another, types which nothing can part and nothing can prevent from striving towards one another. When such types meet the result is a case of ideal and eternal love.

## CHAPTER II

### SPIRITUAL LOVE

"We know that from the dawn of history not all men have been satisfied by the purely human ways and forms of love. They were not satisfied even by the way of Eros-Hymen, which though generally necessary, honoured and blessed, is in its basis only physical and purely human."—VLADIMIR SOLOVYEV, *Plato*, p. 72.

"FROM the dawn of history"—and yet any love other than the purely human has not only never been understood or accepted, but has been, if not ignored, rejected as impossible, or condemned as in some way abnormal.<sup>1</sup> While the indisputable fact remains that there are, and have always been, certain individuals whose conception of love is entirely different—different in kind, not degree—from the physical and purely human. Nicolas Berdyaev, another great Russian thinker, affirms that the mystical, the positive religious significance, of love has never been understood,

and therefore Love, like so many other things in the creative life of man, remains unexplained and unsanctified, condemned to a tragic destiny in the world.<sup>2</sup>

It would seem that in many respects the Russian temperament is more ready to understand and embrace

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. Wilson Knight, *Atlantic Crossing*, p. 175 : It is strange that the most proper sort of person often fails to understand and violently opposes any rich experience that is not close-bound to sex-organs and procreation.

<sup>2</sup> *Freedom and the Spirit*, p. 205.

mystical significances, which would account for the unique quality of worship found in the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the special worship of Sophia, Divine Wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

In the "Advertisement" to *Epipsychidion* Shelley wrote ✂

The present poem, like the *Vita Nuova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers . . . and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats.

He was intensely aware of this lack of a common organ of perception, and knew to his cost that nowhere is this lack more pitifully, more tragically, revealed than in the approach to the whole subject of love. Shelley was married (another poet in whom sexual fulfilment had not destroyed creativeness)—indeed, more happily married than most poets can hope to be ; he was not denied the joy of mental companionship either ; Mary was a woman of rare intelligence and intellect, and it seems clear that to the end they loved each other truly, nevertheless—and this is the point where the majority stumble and fail to understand—this love, (a true and beautiful human love,) no doubt Eros-Hymen in perfection, did not prevent the poet experiencing an intensity of emotion *of quite another order* for the symbol of spiritual love embodied in the person of Emilia Viviani :

. . . in the fields of Immortality  
My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,  
A divine substance in a place divine.

<sup>1</sup> See Bulgakov, *The Wisdom of God*.

He describes in the poem how :

There was a being whom my spirit oft  
Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft  
In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn . . .

then how :

In many mortal forms I rashly sought  
The shadow of that idol of my thought . . .

and finally :

At length into the obscure forest came  
The vision I had sought through grief and shame.

And from her presence life was radiated  
Through the grey earth and branches bare and dead ;  
So that her way was paved, and roofed above  
With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love . . .

. . . this glorious one  
Floated into the cavern where I lay  
And called my spirit, and the dreaming clay  
Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below  
As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow  
I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night  
Was penetrating me with living light ;  
I knew it was the vision veiled from me  
So many years . . .

This type of experience may or may not be ignored, may or may not be understood, but its reality cannot be denied. It is in fact a type so painful, so fraught with despairs, in spite of its transcendent beauty, that it is not very likely that anyone knowing its nature, would affect to know it unless it were too vivid to brook denial. The torment lies mainly in the inability



to unite it with the more materialistic experience of every day, to bridge in some way the unfathomable gulf. For to accept while still confined in the body an essentially spiritual experience, without the ability in any way to incarnate it, is to know the zenith of both human and supra-human anguish. The poet incarnates it in some degree in his poem, but only in some degree, there is always a torturing residue. Shelley's poem makes quite clear the non-physical nature of the passion : [ he refers to the beloved as " sister," " heart's sister " and cries : " Would we had been twins of the same mother ! " <sup>1</sup> imploring her ]

To whatsoe'er of dull mortality  
Is mine, remain a vestal sister still ;  
To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,  
Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united.

His vision carries him over paradisal seas (a favourite immortality symbol with Shelley : [ the visionary boat dancing over enchanted seas, ] a significant image, since he himself was borne to death in a boat, aptly named Ariel, the free spirit of the imagination. He found death in the sea he loved so passionately). The boat in *Epipsychidion* bears them to an island of dreams, far from the torturing world, where they

. . . will rise, and sit, and walk together,  
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,  
And wander in the meadows, or ascend  
The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens  
bend

With lightest wind, to touch their paramour . . .

. . . . .

<sup>1</sup> The true significance of the desire is not disposed of as readily as Mr. Herbert Read in his essay *In Defence of Shelley* suggests.

. . . and talk, until thought's melody  
Becomes too sweet for utterance, and it die  
In words, to live again in looks, which dart  
With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,  
Harmonising silence without a sound.

The whole poem is "too sweet for utterance"; it is perhaps the greatest attempt in any language, in the whole history of poetry, to give expression to what is in fact inexpressible. The imagery, though passionate to the point of ecstasy, is only faintly, if at all, erotic: it reflects in every line the purged, transcendent passion of the poet, and in the lines

Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound  
And our veins beat together; and our lips  
With other eloquence than words, eclipse  
The soul that burns between them . . .

the very essence of androgynous passion is revealed: the passionate desire for the reunion of that which was once one, and which has been so cruelly sundered. Since that severing, each half has hungered, has ached, for the other: the desire, more, the intense need, for reunion, colours, shadows, inflames life on earth; there is no loneliness comparable with that loneliness, the desire of two magnetised halves inevitably striving to come together again and create once more the perfect whole. And frequently bodies unite, but far less frequently souls, and then the whole, which of its nature demands perfection, is marred, with disastrous results.

In his enlightening study of Shelley, *The Pursuit of Death*, Professor Kurtz, in common with almost all Shelleyan critics, remarks on the difficulty, indeed the impossibility, of reconciling the subject-matter of



*Epipsychidion* with what Shelley himself calls the "matter-of-fact history of the circumstances," and furthermore says that :

Symbolism . . . makes for disastrous living just so far as it elevates persons and things to an ideality they can nowise support. . . . Neither Harriet, nor Mary, nor Emilia, could attain to perpetual Witchhood (he is referring to the symbol of the Witch of Atlas).

But what no critic, so far as I have at present discovered, appears to understand is that the poet has no desire for the embodiment of his ideal to "attain to perpetual Witchhood." The poet is a supreme realist, and is more aware than most men of the frailties of human nature. **U**n his "idealising" poetry he expresses his awareness of the soul and the spirit of the beloved ; *there* he sees the image of God, and it would be ungracious not to worship.} But he does not expect perfection *in the human being.*} Here again we come against one of the paradoxes of spiritual truth. The whole man, consisting of body, mind, heart, soul and spirit, cannot be perfect, in our present state of earthly development, but though the heart fails often and the mind too frequently contacts evil, yet in the soul and the spirit perfection may be mirrored. Shelley lived too consciously, too painfully, in an imperfect and cruel world ; he knew life and humanity, to his heavy cost, better than most men, with the result that he would certainly never expect even the women he loved most deeply to manifest continuously in their daily living the attributes of angels. It should be more generally recognised that those who have the gift of seeing the soul are not "idealists" in the usually-

accepted sense of the word ; actually they are the true realists.

Mr. Kurtz remarks that

the physical transports of Emilia and the poet are the frankest in all Shelley's writing. Indeed, they shock even the Shelley enthusiasts—or most of them.

This is not so. The truth is, as with mysticism, erotic imagery has to be used to express a transcendental experience, because for the transcendental there is no language. In what other words could the union of soul with soul be expressed ? The mystical poet is faced with precisely the same difficulty as the religious mystic : he is well aware that his ineffable experience lies beyond the reach of words, and that if words are attempted, [the danger of misrepresentation is grave.] Nevertheless, the power and reality of the experience is such that it demands the relief of words. Unhappily, life on earth incessantly makes these well-nigh impossible demands : the inner reality of an ineffable experience threatens to prove unsatisfying unless it can be in some way linked up with actuality, and the passionate desire for incarnation in words or action persists.

Professor Grabo, in a detailed and valuable book on the growth of Shelley's mind, *The Magic Plant*, plunges, however, far deeper into the morass of misapprehensions about *Epipsychidion*. Although in the main his analysis of the mind and psychology of Shelley is masterly, here he falls into errors common to almost all biographical attempts. Not until critics and the public realise that a poet's life should be interpreted in the light of his poetry, not his poetry



related to his life, will there be any hope of clear or progressive understanding. The poet, the religious genius, all creative artists as a whole, are different *in kind*, not degree, from other men. Jung, in his classification of psychological types, and rough division into extroverts and introverts, has done a great service to the understanding of humanity, and most certainly creative geniuses must be considered in a class apart, of an entirely different *kind* of psychological make-up.<sup>1</sup> There will be little genuine progress, and little peace among men, until these fundamental differences are recognised and accepted. Then every type will be free to develop along its own line, and the unique value of each revealed and liberated.

For example, Professor Grabo writes :

The mortal forms in whom Shelley sought the incarnation of love and beauty are identifiable in his history with perhaps one notable exception. Does the one who was true, " Oh, why not true to me ? " refer to Harriet Grove or Harriet Westbrook ? " The cold chaste moon " is undoubtedly Mary Shelley. . . .

And so on, for several pages. But our understanding and appreciation of *Epipsychidion*, of Shelley's poetry as a whole, is by no means enriched by all this personal investigation and speculation, rather is it impoverished, because the poem has been transferred from its own exalted transcendental level to the perplexing, often petty, level of everyday human life and relationships. When Mr. Grabo remarks that [ " biography now-a-days abounds with nonsense about sex, " ] one agrees wholeheartedly, but unfortunately it also abounds in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the chapter " The Psychology of the Artist " in Beatrice Hinkle's invaluable book, *The Recreating of the Individual*.



extraneous speculative details and suppositions, the truth of which can never be proved. Biography habitually deals in impossibilities ; few things can be more difficult, indeed impossible, than the *true* portrayal of a human life. Even the most intimate friends cannot be in possession of what may be called the *inner facts*. As for the poet, he reveals in his poetry the facts in their true significance, robbed of their everyday vesture, and reclothed in truth.

Far too much has been written of the actual circumstances of Shelley's life, and of the lives of most artists, just as there has been too much poetic interpretation of the wrong, the *biographical*, kind. The inner significance of a poem is of vital importance : a new angle of truth revealed there may be of universal validity and power, but to enquire into the reasons why this angle of truth occurred to the poet, through which influence, or influences, and exactly what, as related to the circumstances of his life, his symbols stand for, comes dangerously near to destroying the value of the poem altogether.

Again, Mr. Grabo remarks :

Some of the late lyrics quite definitely imply his love for Jane Williams, but whether consummated or no remains unsure (p. 395).

From the point of view of the poet—which is never understood—why should it have been consummated ? To the poet, the poetic experience is usually all-sufficient. And what does not remain unsure, is that with all the charges brought against Shelley's moral character, none have ever been proved, and with good reason, for eventually, in spite of every reverse, truth will prevail, and the truth is that with Shelley, the

perfect prototype of the poet, most of his relationships with women would remain on the non-physical plane, and he would have no desire for any other fulfilment. This is completely non-understandable to the average man (again a proof of the difference *in kind*), who, if he should accept it as possible at all, would try to explain it by assuming in Shelley a low degree of sexuality. It can only be understood, and if understood, will inevitably be accepted, by assessing the temperamental make-up of the poet *differently*. Why the psychological differences in men should be so much less readily accepted than the physiological remains one of the many irrational problems of an irrational world. It is habitually overlooked, perhaps not even known by the majority, that for certain types the usual solution or conclusion to a love-affair would be neither a solution nor a conclusion, being in fact an *impossible* outcome, presenting, not a solution at all, but rather, another problem; not a conclusion but the beginning of deeper perplexities, and being, *in the last analysis*, passionately resented and undesired. And this is not because of "neurotic" tendencies, or any sort of abnormality, but because, again, of the difference in psychological make-up, because of a passionate sense of conflict with the ideal, which may to some natures be more real even than love itself, and is certainly so interwoven with the concept of love that any desecration of the ideal would bring misery so deep that lifelong frustration would be preferable. As I have said elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> "Purity no less than lust, can be a passion." And it is important to remember that for such types the danger is not of physical temptation, but of mental disintegration and collapse.

<sup>1</sup> *Browning and Modern Thought*, p. 125.

It seems clear that in the life of the artist love creates an almost insoluble conflict, and there is a sense in which submission may be regarded not as fulfilment, but as renunciation. { The artist is conscious that love invades his whole being in a way that threatens his art } the demand to serve two masters is intolerable, while the power of both seems overwhelming. Should he surrender to love (as he invariably does), the tendency is to surrender so whole-heartedly—by very reason of his deep unwillingness—that it means a definite renunciation. The great man is inevitably intolerant of compromise ; he cannot give divided allegiance, or, if he does, he is continually conscious of violation.

/ Sexual love, therefore, is an invasion of the self which the creative artist passionately resents.<sup>1</sup> This partly explains why so many turn to a mother or a sister, where the comfort and pleasure of feminine companionship may be found without this intolerable intrusion and disturbance.

There are many reasons why certain types of individuals look for love in what appear to the majority to be strange forms, but the reasons are comparatively rarely compatible with the theories of the Freudian psycho-pathologists.<sup>2</sup>

For example, the love of Socrates, and of Sappho, for their fair young friends is evidence of nothing

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Beatrice Hinkle, *The Recreating of the Individual*, Chapter VII.

<sup>2</sup> The more recent, comprehensive and enlightened view of psychology has moved far from the narrow conceptions of Freudianism. See, for example, Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man*, especially Chapter III, and Ouspensky, *A New Model of the Universe*, pp. 272, 273. The science of psychology does not deal with the *soul*, as its name suggests, but with the *mind*, which obviously accounts for its inadequacy in any attempt to solve problems belonging to the *whole man*.

more nor less than the idealist's passionate search for *beauty* wherever it may be manifested. To quote Maximus of Tyre :

The love of the fair Lesbian<sup>1</sup> was surely the same as the art of love practised by Socrates. They both appear to me to have practised the same sort of friendship, he of males, she of females, both declaring that their beloved were many in number and that they were captivated by all beautiful persons.

It would be as impossible for a poet not to be captivated by beautiful persons as by beautiful sunsets, dazzling springs, flamboyant autumns, in fact, by all and any manifestations of natural beauty, of which it cannot be denied that the human being is a part.

When Sappho sings of beauty her words are full of beauty and sweetness, and the same when she sings of love and springtime and the halcyon, and the pattern of her poetry is inwoven with every beautiful word there is.<sup>2</sup>

And of herself she says :

(As for me, love has shaken my heart as a down-rushing whirlwind that falls upon the oaks.)

How would it be possible for a woman-poet to find *only in men* the beauty she is by nature compelled to seek ? Often she would be shaken more by love for the extreme loveliness of lovely women. But this love of, and desire for, beauty is not necessarily in any way connected with sexual love. It would be difficult to prove Sappho an "abnormal woman." She was happily married, and had a daughter to whom

<sup>1</sup> The great woman-poet of Lesbos, Sappho.

<sup>2</sup> Demetrius, *On Style*.



she gave a perfectly natural maternal affection. Socrates also was married, though not happily. Again it becomes increasingly clear that [love in the poet can be, most often is, independent of sexual emotion]. As a result of misunderstanding, misrepresentation and ignorance, Socrates was put to death for perverting the youth of Athens,<sup>1</sup> when actually he was teaching them to pursue and value Truth, so unwelcome an occupation in the eyes of a world nourished on falsity that his death on those grounds alone would be understandable. But hatred of truth cannot be given as a reason, therefore some other pretext must be advanced. And Sappho's poems were burned by the early Church, whose leaders took alarm at any manifestations of sex, normal or supposedly otherwise, being themselves so maladjusted that they were incapable of seeing purity in anything, in itself an interesting, but in its results a disastrous, pathological phenomenon. The accusers in these cases always stand self-accused. Unfortunately until this day *the acts of the Church* are confused with *the principles of Christianity*, to the serious, often disastrous, detriment of the gospel of Christ.

It is now generally conceded that the poems of Sappho reveal such extreme, such rare, delicacy of feeling, such exquisite sensibility and such an unsurpassed sensitivity to beauty and love in its most perfect forms, that the accusations against her moral character were entirely unfounded, and it is unfortunate that the term Lesbianism survives to preserve confusion concerning the true nature and significance of Sapphic love.

Here, again, the difficulty of imagery arises. Sappho

<sup>1</sup> Leonardo da Vinci was at one time similarly accused.



had no choice but to use words of erotic, even sometimes physical, significance. And when she speaks of "burning passion" it is, of course, perplexing to the average reader, whose thoughts since adolescence have been directed unswervingly towards sexuality, by popular stage-representations, films, popular writings of all kinds, newspaper advertisements, and even posters. So it becomes increasingly difficult to interpret the word "passion" as "*any* strong, deep feeling" (one of the dictionary definitions), and obviously no human being could "burn" with any emotion other than sexual desire. As a matter of plain fact, if this were so, life would be considerably simpler than it is.

The greatest minds have always been quick to apprehend and affirm the transfiguring power and reality of human affections, indeed, "inspired men are distinguished by an excess of love, which is an inextinguishable radiance, illumining others."<sup>1</sup> And while some of the greatest love-poetry has been inspired by the love of man and woman, there are notable examples of poems born of a transcendent friendship-love between people of the same sex: most of Shakespeare's Sonnets, Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, and, of course, most of the poems of Sappho. Emerson, in his essay *On Friendship*, says:

The moment we indulge our affections, the earth is metamorphosed: there is no winter, and no night, all tragedies vanish . . . nothing fills the proceeding eternity but the forms all radiant of beloved persons. . . . Shall I not call God the Beautiful, who daily showeth himself so to me in his gifts? . . . High thanks I owe you, excellent

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Gilman, *Toscanini and Great Music*.

lovers, who carry out the world for me to new and noble depths, and enlarge the meaning of all my thoughts. . . . / Friendship, like the immortality of the soul, is too good to be believed.)

Tennyson, poet of the impeccable Victorians, did not hesitate to write of his love for his friend Arthur Hallam, "the man I held as half-divine," in terms of strong sentiment :

When each by turns was guide to each,  
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought,  
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech :

And all we met was fair and good,  
And all was good that Time could bring,  
And all the secret of the Spring  
Moved in the chambers of the blood.<sup>1</sup>

D. H. Lawrence, who understood so many deep secrets of the self, always recognised the necessity for profound and intimate relationships between people of the same sex, *in addition to* the normal sex-relationship between men and women. He knew how friendship-love can expand and enrich the self, yet, being Lawrence, he harmed rather than furthered his cause by his method of approach, by the hyperphysical imagery inevitable to him. His strange worship of the body, a worship difficult always to interpret symbolically, infected almost everything he wrote. Because he was possessed by a knowledge wholly different *in kind* from the average, he was inevitably tormented with the impossibility of conveying this knowledge

<sup>1</sup> In Memoriam.

in words, and it seemed to him crucial, and therefore must be conveyed. So un-at-home in the numb world of "average conscientious intelligent opinion,"<sup>1</sup> the very intensity of his supra-rational knowing caused him to stumble and wound, losing himself perpetually in labyrinths of complicated speculation on the nature of the real, the possible quality of human relationships and reactions, finding himself baffled, retreating at last wounded and enraged, only to emerge again as soon as he had regained his emotional strength to renew the frustrating search. If he could have realised the impossibility of conveying his apprehensions to the average man, realised that his perceptions were of an altogether different order,<sup>2</sup> and that therefore the average man, through no fault of his own, but simply through a fundamental *difference*, would never be able to listen understandingly to a message he was unready to hear, he might have found a measure of peace, and, incidentally, have developed into a better writer, because far too often the sense of baffling warfare, the taint of disillusion and consequent bitterness, mars his writing.

After the fevered phraseology of Lawrence, Tennyson's calm, somewhat sentimental words inevitably tend to fall flat, yet there breathes in them the same spirit that drove Lawrence to frenzies: the love is the same, but the two channels for that love are temperamentally poles apart:

<sup>1</sup> An apt phrase borrowed from Mr. Michael Roberts.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting here to compare Mr. Ouspensky's penetrating remarks on Superman in *A New Model of the Universe*: "We must understand that he will live a certain peculiar life of his own, which will be very unlike the lives of ordinary men and difficult for us to conceive. There will be very much suffering in his life . . . and there will also be joys of which ordinary men have no idea."

/ Whatever way my days decline  
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone  
 His being working in mine own,  
 The footsteps of his life in mine. /

سبحانه

Nor, after affirming " Love is and was my Lord and King " does he hesitate to declare :

/ My love involves the love before :  
 My love is vaster passion now :  
 Though mixed with God and Nature thou,  
 I seem to love thee more and more . . .

Thy voice is on the rolling air ;  
 I hear thee where the waters run ;  
 Thou standest in the rising sun,  
 And in the setting thou art fair /

This cannot be classed as anything but " love-poetry." But it has enhanced, not damaged, Tennyson's reputation. Nor have Shakespeare's Sonnets suffered through the knowledge that most were inspired by love for a young man, not for a woman. As always, " not the thing said, but the way of saying it " is the final test. In any case, there is too little understanding of the inevitably bi-sexual psychological nature of the poet. In his brilliant essay, " The Shakespearian Integrity," in *The Burning Oracle*, Mr. Knight remarks that this aspect of Shakespeare may prove "distressing" to some, but none of these speculations would be distressing if the psychology of the creative artist were more carefully and sympathetically studied, and the whole " problem " of love more adequately understood. (In the artist's life, *love* is primary) to this vast inclusive emotion all else is subsidiary, and sexual love a *part only* of the infinite whole.

One day the multiform aspects of love will be recognised, even the hybrid now seeming so alien, Eros-Agapé. The wide universal Christian love Agapé yet cannot exist in all its richness without the twin-self Eros, of whom, all love is born, who "demands full power for his active and creative genius."<sup>1</sup> This demand naturally involves infinite variety, and to narrow the conception of love to the sexual alone, or even to suggest that all love between man and woman is exclusively sexual, in origin if not in effect, is to betray a paucity of imagination and wisdom. As Berdyaev says :

The gulf which separates racial love (the love that begets) and the mystical love whose goal is eternity creates an antinomy for Christian thinking.<sup>2</sup>

But it is an antinomy that can be resolved, and will be when men recognise the infinite variations possible in the widely-differing temperaments that compose the human race, and the divine nature and origin of love itself.

## II

Poetry, all the utterances of great literature, struggle with the impossible task of transmitting the reality of experience through the unreality of language. Yet it can, and does, happen in the greatest literature that the intensity of the experience, the degree of sensibility in the writer, is such that the quality of the experience shines through words which would otherwise be commonplace. This is the final test, the

<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Solovyev, *Plato*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Freedom and the Spirit*, p. 205.



indefinable "magic" of great writing. It must be accepted as a mystery, beyond the analysis of the academic commentators, who often seem to suggest that there can be a rigid rule, almost a mathematical rule, which can be applied to explain the creation of poetry. But the evidence of the poets themselves is of greater value than that of any writer *about* poetry.

Sometimes green sap rises in me  
 In re-ascending springs,  
 And rushing mounting blood  
 Sings in deafened ears . . .  
 And cob-webbed fears  
 Swing free.

Wild wind discord rings  
 Through my branch-lifted brain  
 And . . . silence floats  
 Storm-splintered  
 On a swaying field again . . .

Strange faith stings in its rebirth,  
 And faith springs new in me,  
 Christ crucified on the tree,  
 Christ-blood rising in me,  
 Sun-flames dancing on the earth,  
 Wind-wings glancing through the sea.<sup>1</sup>

This particular poem has an undeniable authenticity. The writer is entirely unconscious during the writing whence the imagery and symbolism arises, only to discover later their valid origin in *consciously unknown* ancient legends and myths.<sup>2</sup> The poetry comes without volition or conscious knowledge. "Green sap

<sup>1</sup> Noel Essex, *Shade Tides*, p. 20, The Making of Poetry.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* W. F. Jackson Knight's Introduction to *Shade Tides*.

riser " and " strange faith stings in its rebirth." And while it is true that with all genuine poets the poetry comes without volition, and is to a greater or lesser degree " dictated," as with Blake, yet with Noel Essex the case is doubly mysterious, because of the contact of the source whence poetry springs with a vast sea of knowledge *consciously* unknown. There is no rational explanation: the poetic experience is beyond analysis, and must be accepted as final on its own plane of reality. This the scientific investigators of psychic phenomena are now obliged to admit. In a world apparently based on material foundations the real foundations are too easily overlooked, and always with disastrous results. It is inevitably simpler to accept the tangible evidence of the senses rather than the intangible evidence of the soul. But the whole course of life is governed by these intangible evidences, and it is on that plane that the only real life is lived.

The musician is more fortunate than the poet. Music, concrete in form, abstract in substance, deals more successfully than even poetic imagery with indefinable emotional<sup>1</sup> and spiritual states, evoking by harmonious (or discordant) combinations and variations of sound a correspondent state in the listener. [Music paints an emotional landscape, and in the creations of every great composer the feeling substance of the creator is clearly revealed to the sensitive listener. And music and poetry being so

<sup>1</sup> In England especially, where art and all pertaining to it is suspect, the word " emotional " has fallen into disrepute. It is a word which cannot, however, be divorced from æsthetics, since art is *primarily* (though not wholly) concerned with emotion. In the last resort, the concern of art is with reality, and the way to reality lies normally through the emotions.

closely akin, there is an affinity between certain composers and poets : for example, Brahms and Browning, Wagner and D. H. Lawrence, Chopin and Keats. The music of Brahms, like the poetry of Browning, expresses the perfect fusion of spirit and flesh. Flesh is inevitably spiritualised, because in it spirit is incarnate. Brahms and Browning understood, in a way D. H. Lawrence never could, the sanctity of the body *as* the temple of the Holy Spirit, and *therefore* to be revered. Lawrence was too disposed to worship the flesh in itself, as possessing a valid sanctity of its own. Certainly it can be argued that to a final understanding, to the sacramental view, *all* that manifests life is sacred, but this was scarcely the sense in which Lawrence felt the flesh to be worthy of worship. One of the great troubles with Lawrence was undoubtedly, as with too many other writers, that he lacked a keen self-critical faculty. He also lacked intellectual humility. In his view, feeling, intuition, needed no intellectual support. His contempt for the intellect is notorious. It is a common enough fault in the genius (though not in the greatest geniuses, in whom intuition, immediate knowledge, irrefutable insight, and reason and intellect are perfectly blended). It is necessary to be able to defend intellectually what is known intuitively, but the genius of the Lawrence type scorns such equipoise. If Lawrence had been able to view his own work with the dispassionate eye of a Goethe <sup>1</sup> he would never have published, possibly

<sup>1</sup> Beatrice Hinkle in *The Recreating of the Individual* writes with penetrating psychological insight and knowledge of Goethe as "the great genius of life, the poet and artist who lives in both realms and who attains in himself a marvellous maturity and adaptation." It is unfortunate that Lawrence never attained, despite his deep-rooted wisdom, to anything like maturity.

never have written, a work so ultimately absurd as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, where sex is presented as the supreme preoccupation of mind and body, nor can custom stale its infinite variety.<sup>1</sup> In Lawrence, faith in his own genius ran riot. Although a certain unshakable belief in his vocation is essential to an artist, such faith can, unless married to a strong self-critical faculty, produce disastrous results. Only an overmastering belief that every word he wrote was fused with the "divine afflatus" will account for the spate of words Lawrence poured out which should never have been published at all, not so much for moral as for æsthetic reasons. From this point of view they are offensive: crude, uncultured, often in bad taste. This applies pre-eminently to *Fantasia of the Unconscious* and to many passages in the novels, where a questionable facetiousness mars the style. Because of a certain innate arrogance, born of class-consciousness and a sense of social inferiority, the miner's son never wholly learned the more agreeable customs of the gentler-born, and here and there throughout his writings he betrays himself. Yet, in spite of any and every failing, Lawrence was a true prophet. He had things to say which man is not yet able to hear. His kinship with Wagner lies in his peculiarly rich, sensuous manner of expression, his tendency towards paganism and love of the ancient gods and myths, possibly also in his apprehension of the essential wonder of the physical and a unique

<sup>1</sup> He contradicts this theory in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*—a work in which wisdom and absurdity is curiously mingled—where he affirms that the impulse of religion and art, the non-physical creative impulses, are primary, *not* the sex-impulse. However, Lawrence was too much of a genius to be wholly consistent. Apparent inconsistency in the genius is evidence of his awareness of the contradictions inherent in all profundities.



conception of love./ He would have understood the transcendental humanism of *Tristan*. But he never attained to the final understanding and peace of *Parsifal*.

Chopin was pre-eminently the musician of ineffable love, of rich, sensuous beauty. His music sighs of love's nostalgia, of beauty's ghosts—moonlight on a lake, where water-lilies sleep, and the musician-poet leans down to touch the moon's drowned self. But his touch causes the quiet water to quiver and so shatter to fragments the perfect image. So it must be : earthly love no more than a reflection of the distant ideal, distorted and broken the moment it is touched.<sup>1</sup> And the music sighs, questions, the phrases eternally repeat the refrain "Not here ! Not here ! Here the heart can only yearn and break." Chopin's world is the world of pure romance, of passionate human love, the sensuous, tangible warmth and agony of vulnerable human emotions, made radiant and transcendental by the Keats among musicians. In the Impromptu in F Sharp, for example, the music weaves a similar pre-Raphaelite tapestry of colourful sound to *The Eve of St. Agnes*, both rich in sensuous suggestion. The picture is different. Search is there, a questing and a questioning, and a lady lovely as Madeline waiting in her castle tower, waiting, watching, watching the swift, sure passing of the seasons, the breaking of spring buds, the riot of summer flowers ; autumn setting the trees alight, the landscape snow-smoothed and silent. Waiting, watching . . . swans sailing on the silver lake, bright-winged birds flitting among the trees, harvest mellowing the distant fields. . . . Waiting, watching, the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 57 et seq.



years passing . . . the white road winding empty as ever over the hills. Waiting, watching, watching the white and empty road. . . . At last a dark speck on the white emptiness, a speck growing larger and larger, clouds of dust flying from a horse's hoofs, a pennon flying in the wind, the glint of armour in the sun. Nearer, nearer . . . the thundering of hooves, thundering nearer, nearer, till at last a voice sings in her ears, thunders in her heart. . . . The bright thread of music breaks, fainting, failing, unable to bear the weight of her questioning and conflict, the frail web strained. So the harmony suspends awhile in anxious waiting, until, together at last, the lovers weave a richer pattern, butterfly-light, a faery life-stream dancing over gleaming pebbles. . . .

There was little comfort on earth for either Chopin or Keats: both found it richer to die than to live in a world too bleak and harsh for bright-winged Eros:

. . . and for many a time  
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
 Called him soft names in many a muséd rhyme,  
 To take into the air my quiet breath;  
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain . . .<sup>1</sup>

Chopin sought consolation and security in a relationship with a woman temperamentally his antithesis, George Sand, the powerful woman of genius, masculine intellect and masculine passions, an emotional vampire who slowly but surely sapped and finally destroyed him. But at bottom the soul cannot tolerate antitheses, and the relationship brought him little

<sup>1</sup> *Ode to a Nightingale.*

consolation, and less security. George Sand cared for him kindly enough, and at first he could not know that under her powerful protectiveness lurked a subtle coarseness which must eventually revolt him, and a quality of passion which must finally destroy him. There are many such psychological murders : between lovers, husbands and wives, parents and children, intimate friends, but up to the present no attention has been paid to them, and the crime flourishes unchecked.<sup>1</sup> Little or nothing is understood of the play and interplay of personalities, of the reality of psychic atmosphere, of, in fact, the hidden laws which actually govern human life. This line of investigation is for the psycho-physiologist, the medical philosopher, the scientist of vivid imagination and psychic sensibility, and these types are rare. But in such investigation alone lies the clue to almost all human tragedy. Psychical respiration is as difficult in some environments as physical breathing is in others, and when the self is stifled death must eventually ensue. Therefore the struggles between psychical incompatibles are in grim fact battles to the death. If the psyche is to survive, a way of escape must be found. Spiritual freedom, the deep inner emancipation, is the true solution, but in some cases, when the emotional self is preternaturally sensitive, the only safety may lie in a radical change of environment, a total removal from the danger-zone. Yet all these tragedies might be averted altogether by a deeper understanding of love, and a clearer insight into physical and psychological realities. Perhaps Chopin need not have been killed by George Sand, nor Keats

<sup>1</sup> A remarkable novel on this theme is Radclyffe Hall's *The Unlit Lamp*.

by Fanny Brawne, nor Heine by Amalie. It seems clear also that Swift's behaviour directly contributed to the death of Esther Vanhomrigh. ✕

We . . . are unable to follow human personality into every region where it extends. Our techniques do not grasp things having neither dimensions nor weight. They only trace those situated in time and space. They are incapable of measuring vanity, hatred, love, beauty, or the dreams of the scientist, the inspiration of the poet, the elevation of the mystical soul towards God. But they easily record physiological aspects and material results of these psychological states. . . . Outside the domain of intelligence, nothing is clearly definable. But the elusiveness of a thing does not prove its non-existence.<sup>1</sup>

Carrel, who is an eminent scientist, not an idealising theorist, but a man of practical knowledge and experience, sees clearly that hitherto investigation of the ills of man has started from the wrong end. The body-soul relationship is really the soul-body relationship. The followers of spiritual healing in its various branches unquestionably have their finger on the right spot; their weakness too often lies in an insufficient knowledge of the physiological factors. It should really be as essential for a spiritual healer to take a medical degree as it is for a psycho-therapist. But in every case mind and body should be studied concurrently, never, as at present, in isolation.

The attitude of man to what for want of a better word one must call psychic phenomena has undergone many changes during the centuries of civilisation.

<sup>1</sup> Alexis Carrel, *Man the Unknown*, pp. 49, 50.

Unhesitating acceptance changed to incredulity as "knowledge" increased. At one time the psychic basis to all life was recognised as the one true background. Such periods of thought have fluctuated with periods of doubt and rationalism, when the idea of anything but a material foundation to life was received with scorn. Recently the reaction from the Romantic Revival, which affected not only literature, has given birth to another period of rationalism, with a consequent suffocation of both spiritual and psychic understanding. There has been a recoil both from religion and from beauty, and Modernism is the logical result. An age which spurns the psychical and spiritual foundations of life inevitably mistrusts anything in the nature of the miraculous, and needs must neglect the idea of Beauty as a supreme value. But the fact that modernists, both in religion and in art, seek to make religion acceptable to the modern mind by rational explanation, and art acceptable by the exaltation of the commonplace, while rigidly rejecting the miraculous and the beautiful, is in itself deeply significant, because it is evident, from this attempt alone, that the spiritual foundations cannot be ignored, therefore the miraculous must somehow be brought to the level of reason, and all must have an element of "beauty." The confusion of thought is interesting. Finally, modernists find themselves in the same position as traditionalists, having arrived there by a subtly inverted process. If the concepts of spiritual truth and æsthetic beauty could be completely ignored, there would be no attempts to rationalise them. One of the most hopeful aspects of the situation is the attempt to investigate psychic phenomena scientifically, and subtly but surely science is



coming to embrace the discoveries of the dimension beyond their usual computation.† The rapid advance of psycho-analysis, psycho-therapy, and so on in the last thirty years, is a significant development. Here a science based solely on rational concepts is engaged in investigation of those regions hitherto confined to metaphysics. Even hypnosis, fifty years ago strongly suspect, is now a fairly common addition to the psychologist's methods of therapy, and is generally regarded as a scientific phenomenon.

In his interesting book, *Pain, Sex and Time*, Mr. Gerald Heard insists that the future evolution of the human race cannot be other than psychical. The limit of man's physical evolution has been reached. There can be no further progress except along a line hitherto too much neglected :

The first great stage of advance was the physical, the second was the technical, the third must be the psychical (p. 11).

Mr. Heard, like Dr. Carrel, and other enlightened thinkers, realises that the present crisis of civilisation is entirely due to a deep misunderstanding and consequent shattering of the fundamental laws governing life. Progress, especially in the last hundred years, has been along lines that can only lead to disaster and destruction. The scientists must realise that their discoveries have mastered them, they have developed a powerful, evil life of their own ; these immense powers were not rightly dedicated, they have been brought to serve a godless humanism, with the inevitable result that the power of evil has taken control and now uses them solely for destruction.

It may, indeed possibly must, be, as both Mr. Heard



and Mr. Ouspensky<sup>1</sup> suggest, that salvation can only come from the few, the enlightened "remnant," and even so, civilisation as it at present survives may eventually cease, and a new order be built from the ruins. Inevitably, the man of clear sight must work alone, or in company only with those few who to a certain degree share his vision :

When man begins to work out a technique whereby he might help release and express the subconscious forces which were pressing him, he does so as an individual who must work secretly. Whether within the official religion, or as later with the hermetics, outside of it, man explored, as it were, underground and as a lonely pioneer, leaving the main masses behind.<sup>2</sup>

At all times of world-crisis, recovery and re-creation has come through a handful of men who had been able through the welter of suffering, destruction and sin, to maintain an unsullied integrity, a perfectly clear and unvitiated vision of truth.<sup>3</sup> The most pressing need of the world to-day is a tireless search for the true values ; until they are established progress is impossible, there can only be chaos.

In *Man the Unknown*, Dr. Carrel gives insanity statistics which must horrify the sensitive and thoughtful reader. And there is no doubt whatever that these conditions are almost without exception due to maladjustment to the fundamentals of human life. Jung has gone so far as to say that a minute percentage only of mental disorder is due to *organic* disease. The root of the trouble lies elsewhere. The situation,

<sup>1</sup> *A New Model of the Universe*. <sup>2</sup> *Pain, Sex and Time*, pp. 121-2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *The Master Builders*, p. 8.

however, is complex. Emotional disorder of any kind can eventually *produce* organic disease. In the past it has been customary to ignore all but the physical basis. The doctor, the specialist, do not look into the difficulties of the emotional life. But, as Dr. Carrel says :

As much importance should be given to feelings as to thermo-dynamics. . . . Mental activities should become as important as physiological ones. Hygienists should be asked why they concern themselves exclusively with the prevention of organic disease and not with that of mental and nervous disturbances. Why they pay no attention to spiritual health. Why they segregate people ill with infections *and not those who propagate intellectual and moral maladies* <sup>1</sup> (p. 263).

And here psychology links up with philosophy and religion. The pursuit and acceptance of truth is the first step towards mental and spiritual health. Mental breakdown is most commonly due to emotional conflict, to a refusal, or rather, incapacity, to face unwelcome truth. And without this courageous attitude there can be no peace, because truth will finally brook no denial. The self is in constant danger of disintegration. Without the courage of absolute honesty the deep inner freedom can never be attained. But, as I have said elsewhere,<sup>2</sup>

the human mind is provided with an almost limitless number of defences against unwelcome truth ; day by day it unconsciously erects barriers.

<sup>1</sup> The *italics* are mine.

<sup>2</sup> *Browning and Modern Thought*, p. 101.

Eventually, however, the time must come when the defences are broken down. This is often the great moment, the crisis, with which Browning throughout his work is so greatly concerned. The opportunity to accept and follow truth once rejected, it is unlikely that the chance will come again. The doorway is firmly closed. Slow but certain decay of the personality ensues. Berdyaev in all his writings makes clear that the awakening of spirit and the subsequent development of the free personality is the most important task man has to undertake, which involves, however so much pain and difficulty, such almost unbearable suffering, that very few individuals are capable of carrying the process through to its conclusion. Possibly this is what is meant by the words, "Many are called, but few are chosen." The chosen, presumably, are those who have been tried in the all-but consuming fire of this refining process and have survived the peril and the pain, unshaken in the certainty that only through such endurance can the spirit be liberated in the service of God. The torturing difficulty of these processes lies most often in the fact that the acceptance of truth involves the destruction of ideals long considered finally valid. Frequently these ideals involve the concept of loyalty, than which perhaps no other human concept has given more trouble or led to more dishonesty. Loyalty to marriage, to parent, child, friend, too often may mean loyalty to falsity, not to truth. In the cause of ultimate truth it should be possible, indeed inevitable, to overthrow all lesser ideals, and in the God-centred life this cannot finally cause the suffering to others that is always so deeply feared.

But because these principles are not understood,

mental breakdown too often follows as a result of a situation which conflicts violently with some deeply-cherished ideal. The cure lies in, first, an understanding of the self and the fundamental *truth* of the situation—here psychology will help—and, next, in a profound *acceptance* (to be rightly distinguished from grey resignation), and an understanding of the true inner freedom which can be possible even in external bondage. This lies in the sphere of religion, and sometimes philosophy. As Keyserling says :

Man can only reach a higher plane from that moment when he learns to see himself as he is, and then to embody his ideals in what actually exists, instead of affirming the existence of what does not exist.<sup>1</sup>

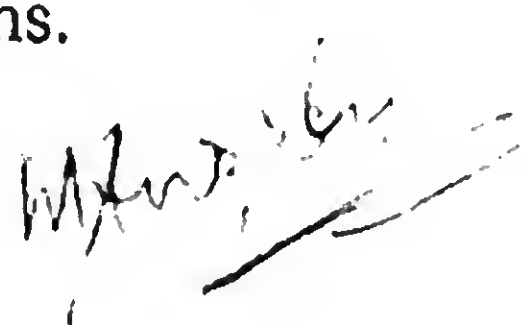
For example, there would be considerably less disharmony and sorrow in many marriages if husband or wife, or preferably, of course, both, were courageous enough to face and accept truth, instead of attempting to live year after year on the illusion that love in its original form still animates their union. This acceptance would not necessarily mean a disruption of the marriage ; such an event would be more likely to result from the refusal to face truth, and the consequent ultimate breakdown. But it would inevitably mean inner honesty and therefore freedom, and a brave adjustment to changed emotional conditions, when it would no doubt be found that although love in its original form had altered out of all recognition, material still remained for building a useful life on different foundations.

For every human being there is a *unique* destiny,

<sup>1</sup> *Problems of Personal Life*, p. 92.

Sometimes the rôle may seem only small, unimportant perhaps, or it may develop into a titantic destiny affecting the lives of millions of his fellow-men, but it is necessary to realise that we have as yet insufficient understanding to judge finally the value of any man's rôle. The vital necessity is for every one to discover the unique part he has to play : what it is that he, and he alone, can contribute to the sum of human existence. Through psychology, which will lead him to self-knowledge, and religion, which will help him to interpret, though necessarily always incompletely, the will of God, he can learn to take his individual place in the vast universe.

There is another way to this understanding : the way of love. Indeed, it is conceivable that Eros, the " Lord and Giver of Life," must always be the *initial* factor in any vital development, and there is abundant evidence that in the majority of instances love alone is responsible for the crises which lead either to progress or destruction. Hence its unparalleled importance in human life, its unrivalled power. Hence the necessity to understand, so far as is humanly possible, the heights, depths and range of its vast potentialities. Love, the secret preoccupation of every human being born into life, must be revered and recognised as lord of life itself. / Throughout history there have been attempts to understand and often to sublimate the power of *sex*, but a yet more inclusive understanding is essential, the fullest understanding of *love* in all its varied manifestations and forms.





## III

"Only love can bring us to the frontiers of the kingdom of the miraculous, for love is that mystery from which all miracles are born, since it is from love—*on all the numberless levels on which it is manifest*<sup>1</sup> that birth proceeds. To be born again is to realise the spirituality of life."—CLAUDE HOUGHTON, *The Kingdoms of the Spirit*."

It is an interesting fact that the two most famous examples of "ideal" love in the history of man's development flourished in the same country, and approximately during the same period. I refer, of course, to Dante's love for Beatrice and Petrarch's for Laura. The ideal of courtly love, celebrated by the troubadours, prevailed throughout Europe at about the same time<sup>2</sup>: the concept of woman as the inspirer of the noblest thoughts, and highest feats of daring, was common, a remarkable advance from the comparatively recent idea of woman as slave. Never before, and never since, has woman been elevated to such a position in the minds of men. The very intensity of the change determined its excesses. According to Beatrice Hinkle, this period

began for woman slowly and painfully, the awakening to a greater self-consciousness, the recognition of herself as a distinct and separate psychic being apart from Nature's claims . . . not barred from developing those higher human attributes for which man had struggled so long and so painfully.<sup>3</sup>

For a while she was as over-valued as hitherto she had been neglected. But this idealisation gave to the

<sup>1</sup> The *italics* are mine.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed exposition of this development see Mr. C. S. Lewis's *The Allegory of Love*.

<sup>3</sup> *The Recreating of the Individual*, p. 320.

world the magnificent works of Dante and the imperishable sonnets of Petrarch.

The study of the poetry of Dante alone proves in what manner love, Eros, embodied in this instance in the person of Beatrice, leads to the divine, is, in fact, frequently equated with the divine itself.<sup>1</sup> Often there seems to be a conflict between human love and love for God, poignantly expressed in one line of Pope's poem, *Eloisa to Abelard* :

Thy image steals between my God and me.

This is the painful tension which exists inevitably in the soul of the deepest lover : love, "personal" love, directed towards a human being, must it seems, by reason of its intensity, its capacity for possessing the entire life of the lover, clouding his reason, invading every waking and every sleeping hour, make war on and conquer his love for God. And this is deadly sin. There cannot be a divided allegiance in so vital a loyalty. The God of all life and the god of love both demand unconditional surrender. The problem is akin to the conflict between love and art, though it invariably goes deeper, and on its solution depends the entire future life of the lover. Dante's love, and the resultant poetry, might point the way to a solution. Finally, the apparent conflict ("apparent" because once it is resolved it is seen to be based on a misconception, which is true of all psychological conflict), lies in an insufficient understanding of the nature of love. Dante possesses the true understanding ; he had no difficulty in recognising Eros as God's messenger on earth :

<sup>1</sup> Two recent books, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (Maud Bodkin) and *The Christian Renaissance* (G. Wilson Knight) deal revealingly with the divine-erotic aspect of Dante's love and the rôle played by Beatrice.

An angel of his blessed knowledge saith  
 To God : “ Lord, in the world that Thou hast made  
 A miracle in action is display’d,  
 By reason of a soul whose splendours fare  
 Even hither ; and since Heaven requireth  
 Nought saving her, for her it prayeth Thee,  
 Thy saints crying aloud continually.”  
 Yet Pity still defends our earthly share  
 In that sweet scul : God answering thus in prayer :  
 My well-beloved, suffer that in peace  
 Your hope remain, while so My pleasure is,  
 There where one dwells who dreads the loss of her,  
 And who in Hell unto the damned shall say,  
 “ I have looked on that for which God’s chosen  
 pray.” <sup>1</sup>

Similarly, the conflict between love and art is based on a fallacy, since love is the life-blood of art, and all three allegiances, God, art, love, are found to be, like the Trinity, the perfect prototype of unity in diversity, not three essences, but one whole. Like all truth, this is a transparent mystery, clouded by over-speculation and intellectual debate. To serve God truly, to serve love truly, means, for the artist, to serve his art ; for every man, to live to his highest capacity. Only so may homage be paid to the highest of ideals. \The lover who thinks to serve his beloved by whole-hearted submission, by material gifts and personal devotion only, has not understood the deepest significance of love.\ And the one thing the artist must *not* do in love’s cause is to surrender his art, no matter how little the object of his love may understand, no matter how it may be resented or opposed. For to deny his art

<sup>1</sup> *La Vita Nuova*. Translation by D. G. Rossetti.

is to deny God, and divine justice exacts punishment for this sin. A fully understood and accepted allegiance to God, to art, and to life inevitably brings with it an understanding of the way to create unity from apparent diversity, and the way is never through a weak, though bravely-intentioned, submission to another individual of different calibre and a different *kind* of understanding. The lover who demands, either explicitly or by implication, the sacrifice of a purpose, a life-work, that he himself may be the better loved and served is working in direct opposition to the divine laws of creativeness and God's purposes for man.

In the chapter on "The Ethics of Creativeness" in *The Destiny of Man*, Berdyaev writes magnificently on the vocation and divine rôle of the artist. The *divine* rôle. This is precisely what comparatively few artists recognise: the *divinity* of their work on earth. But, as Berdyaev in the following passage makes clear:

Under cover of parable Christ refers . . . to man's creative activity, to his creative vocation. Burying one's talents in the ground, i.e. absence of creativeness, is condemned by Christ. The whole of St. Paul's teaching about various gifts is concerned with man's creative vocation. The gifts are from God and they indicate that man is intended to do creative work. These gifts are various, and everyone is called to creative service in accordance with the special gift bestowed upon him.<sup>1</sup>

Every philosopher, every saint, every profound thinker, is aware of the necessity for freedom: the

<sup>1</sup> *The Destiny of Man*, p. 162.

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deep inner freedom, to be carefully distinguished from superficial secular liberty. And this freedom is of the very essence of love ; without it, love is no divine gift but a fundamentally irreligious bondage. Possessiveness, in whatever form it appears (and the form is often subtle), is the destructive element in human relationships. And in the last analysis, possessiveness is rooted in fear, in a profound sense of insecurity. The God-centred life has no need to possess either goods or human beings, knowing where the only true security lies. Were men to realise the pitiful folly of dependence on human agency for safety, a world-revolution would come about. In a world which is in its outward manifestations material, there will inevitably be the necessity for material elements, but the error, even sin, lies in attributing to these any final value. They are no more than means to an end, and have little connection with the true laws of life. Money is one of the best examples of such means : the moment it is valued as an end in itself, evil and sin follow. Hence ' the *love* of money is the root of all evil,' not money itself, which, indeed, being itself a material element, could not have power to create evil. Whereas the love of money, the *immaterial* aspect, works every sort of havoc in human life.<sup>1</sup> From this it can readily be seen that no material element can *of itself* have power : only the *values* attached, the immaterial elements, are potent to create or to destroy. The apparent difficulties in love are due to its dual nature : if it were, as with the animals, no more than a powerful physical instinct, there would be comparatively little

<sup>1</sup> Eugene O'Neill's unpleasant play, *Desire Under the Elms*, lays powerful stress on the truth that lust for possessions, for money, is more *evil* than common physical lust, presumably because less *natural*.



suffering. But in man this powerful physical instinct bows to the majesty of intense spiritual desire. Yet the dualism can be resolved, as ever, by the acceptance of truth. \ Those who look for peace in an abstract spiritual love, or in a gratifying physical relationship, have not reached the final understanding. \ But the issues are deep and obscure.

In Petrarch, for example, the conflict between human and divine love was for many years a torment. In Laura he found the embodiment of ideal love, and to this ideal he remained true for over thirty years, during the twenty-one years of her life after he first saw her in the Church of Santa Clara at Avignon, and for ten years after her death ; nevertheless, from time to time the carnal element in this supreme love intruded, and he saw it as a sin. He was a priest, although not altogether a whole-hearted servant of the Church—it is believed that he took orders mainly as a means to a livelihood. Due undoubtedly to the influence of this great love, his spiritual development strengthened and deepened with the years, and it was then that he began to see his love as a tragic conflict. He sought guidance in the writings of his favourite spiritual adviser, St. Augustine, and attempted to wrestle with his conflict by means of imaginary dialogues between himself and the saint, but found little peace therein. For, as might be expected, this renowned Father of the Church assured him of the realities of his “ sin,” and brought many a specious argument to bear on the problem :

Petrarch insists that his love is pure and believes that he sins only in its excess. All that he has been he owes to her. Augustine declares that this belief is a dangerous illusion, and that his

mortal love had separated him from the love of heavenly things. Petrarch declared that it is not the body but the soul of his beloved with which he is enamoured, that with her increasing age her body became less beautiful but her spirit constantly developed and his love increased. Augustine asks if he would have loved her if she had been ugly. Petrarch answers that he would have done this only if the beauty of her spirit could have been set before his eyes. "Therefore," answers Augustine, "you have loved only her visible body, although her spiritual graces have helped to maintain your passion."<sup>1</sup>

Too well Petrarch knew his Church. There is only one way to God, and that way through Holy Church. The divinity of a mortal passion is inadmissible. All other belief is sin. The acceptance of this doctrine inevitably gives birth to torturing conflict in the soul of the lover who aspires to be a faithful servant of God. Petrarch, born into the Catholic Church, himself a priest,<sup>2</sup> could not, indeed for his immortal soul's sake dared not, withstand the arguments of the Church, represented also in Dionysius, professor of theology in the University of Paris, to whom Petrarch confided his difficulty. The pressure was too strong : finally Petrarch admitted that he loved her body as well as her soul. The Church gained another victory—but only a temporary one : no power devised by man can conquer the power created by God for man's deification. Though his soul might be damned to

<sup>1</sup> William D. Foulke, *Some Love-songs of Petrarch*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> The situation of the priest in relation to society was at that time and in those countries—France and Italy—very different from what it is to-day. And great inconsistencies in matters of love and religion seem to have been general.

everlasting perdition, yet must he still pay homage to his beloved. The great god Love is supreme :

O gentle lady mine  
 Within your eyes a gracious light I see ;  
 The path that leads to heaven it showeth me !  
 Deep in those spheres divine  
 Where I am wont to sit with love alone  
 All visibly your burning heart doth shine  
 And lights me to fair deeds. To glory's throne  
 It points the way and from the ignoble throng  
 Doth draw my soul apart . . .

“ The path that leads to heaven,” not to hell. This is the divine wisdom of the lover, which no argument, no threats, can nullify. After his imaginary discussions with Augustine and his actual ones with Dionysius were exhausted, Petrarch, in the divine-human music of poetry, the only true speech known to man, cried triumphantly :

Full oft her living image have I seen  
 In the clear waters or upon the grass  
 Or in the trunk of some wide-spreading tree  
 Or on a floating cloud. Her face hath been  
 So fair that Helen's it did far surpass,  
 As the bright sun constrains the stars to flee,

and again :

Here upon earth I saw those heavenly charms  
 Unique in all the world ; those angel ways  
 Whose memory both delights me and alarms,  
 Till all I see seems shadow, dream and haze.

Love, honour, tender pity, grief sincere,  
 Weeping did utter sweeter melodies /

Than any that the world is wont to hear ;  
While heaven, attentive, drank the harmonies  
And every leaf on every branch was stilled,  
With such delight the charmed air was filled.

And this exquisite love, inwoven with every beauty  
God has devised for man's joy, is the sinful love  
condemned by the Church as threatening the soul  
with perdition. Possibly these threats were in Pe-  
trarch's mind when he wrote in glad defiance :

Put me where all things wither in the sun,  
Or where his beams grow faint 'mid ice and snow,  
Or where through temperate climes his car doth run,  
Or where the morn doth break or evening glow ;  
Clothe me in purple fortune or in grey,  
Let skies be dark or dull, or airs serene,  
Let it be night, or long or short the day,  
Or ripened years or adolescence green ;  
Put me in heaven, on earth, or down in hell,  
On lofty mountain, or in vale or moor,  
As spirit freed or still in mortal shell,  
With fame illustrious or with name obscure ;  
Through lustrums three I cherish, sigh, adore,  
And so will I continue evermore.

His heart spoke truth : the true lover has courage to  
trust through every vicissitude, every disaster, in  
“ the holiness of the heart's affections,” choosing  
threatened hell with the beloved rather than a promised  
heaven divorced from love. The churches have not  
yet recognised the sovereign power of Eros ; they do  
battle with him bravely, but always in vain. Only  
the understanding and sanctification of human love  
will bring victory and peace to the Church in her

ceaseless struggle with the world. The failure to recognise this lies no doubt at the root of many of Christianity's failures. So far the Church has sanctified marriage only ; it remains silent where love is at issue, preferring to assume and imply that marriage and love are identical, than which there could be, unhappily, no more pitiful fallacy. The failures of marriage are due in a considerable degree to the refusal of the Church to face reality. In the first place, no marriage that is not profoundly Christian should be solemnised in a church. If the clergy were to enquire more closely into the circumstances preceding marriage and concern themselves less with conditions following on marriage, on, for example, the re-marriage of divorced persons, and whether they may or may not be allowed access to the Communion Table (a deeply unchristian problem), these very conditions would less frequently arise. More than three hundred years ago, Milton, a passionate, even belligerent Christian, wrote a magnificent pamphlet on *The Doctrine of Divorce*, stressing the many essentially unchristian aspects of the divorce laws, especially the shocking anomaly of a law which regards the physical aspect of marriage as of paramount importance and ignores the element of human life which the Church should consider pre-eminent—the mind and the soul. So long as there is no physical infidelity, these may shrivel and die. Adultery is sin, while mental cruelty is unrecognised, violation of the soul condoned. In three hundred years there has been but little progress, due chiefly, there can be no doubt, to the rigidity of the Church. The orthodox Christian cannot, or perhaps must not, or will not, admit that the deepest beauty and reality may exist in a relationship unsancti-



fied by the Church, a non-physical relationship of intense spiritual fertility, powerfully creative, while in the holy estate of matrimony, which in the cynical words of Bernard Shaw, "combines the maximum of temptation with the maximum of opportunity," the relationship may be barren and devoid of reality, a heart-breaking travesty of the divine symbolism of the man-woman relationship in its completeness.

All flesh is a symbol of the spirit, the reflection, the image and sign of another far off, yet much more profound, reality. . . . The flesh is not a snare and an illusion ; it is the symbolic reflection of the realities of the physical world. The alliance of the two worlds (the spiritual and the physical), the possibility of their interpenetration, the transfusion of energy from one to the other, are all communicated to us by this symbolic sign.<sup>1</sup>

Then what of the union, ratified by the Church, where there is not, perhaps never has been, spiritual unity ? It would be possible, in order to create a tolerable from an intolerable situation, to argue that the body is of small account, and may therefore be used in isolation from, wholly independently of, the spirit, but this palliative cannot finally satisfy the mind hungering for completeness, nor can it be readily reconciled with a belief in the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. In many circumstances, the bodily union divorced from the deeper sanctifying love need not necessarily be sin, but it must always be a profound violation. Finally, these are not moral or ethical, but spiritual, problems, as, indeed, every human problem is, and

<sup>1</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *Freedom and the Spirit*, p. 61.

until this truth is recognised there will be little true progress. Spirit must be understood as the basis of all life.

Orthodoxy tends to overlook, if it has ever observed, the deepest issues. And only a sanctifying, a true Christianising, of love can ensure that these torturing problems do not arise. As Berdyaev says :

The revelation of the mystical and positive meaning of the love between man and woman (Eros not Agapé) is part of Christian problematics. The mystical significance of love has not received dogmatic elucidation, and what the Fathers of the Church have to say is poor and inadequate.<sup>1</sup>

Not until this mystical and positive meaning is accepted and faithfully considered by the Church will there be any real advance. Young people soon come to realise the Church's disapproval—based on fear—of the radiant god they have no choice but to follow, and this, at bottom, is responsible for the Church's failure to appeal to youth. In later years, when life itself has proved a failure (due, almost without exception, to an imperfect understanding of the rôle of love), the sad and disillusioned turn to the Church for consolation. How pitiful an affront to the religion of dazzling life, the faith to which the richest powers of youth and maturity should be consecrated, not the weakened energies of the elderly and the ailing.

Those few enlightened spirits who have understood and accepted the divine significance of love have always been, and will always be, invested with a power that may seem almost supernatural, but is in fact a pattern

<sup>1</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *Freedom and the Spirit*, p. 205.

of supranatural, or normal, life,<sup>1</sup> the life man should attain to, and can, through an understanding of the true laws. Dante and Petrarch are notable examples, and they were both philosophers, both profoundly religious men, who had pondered deeply on life in all its varied aspects. They were not afraid, indeed they were proud, to acknowledge the sovereignty of love :

I say that from that time forward, Love quite governed my soul; which was immediately espoused to him, and with so safe and undisputed a lordship (by virtue of strong imagination) that I had nothing left for it but to do all his bidding continually.

As I sat thoughtful, I was taken with such a strong trembling at the heart, that it could not have been otherwise in the presence of my lady. Whereupon I perceived that there was an appearance of love beside me, and I seemed to see him coming from my lady, and he said, not aloud, but within my heart : “ Now take heed that thou bless the day when first I entered into thee ; for it is fitting that thou shouldst do so.” <sup>2</sup>

Nor was Dante afraid to equate Beatrice in his thoughts with Christ, as when he describes her coming preceded by the lady Joan, called of many Primavera, Spring, and he reflects that Joan, whose name is taken from John, he who prepared the way for the Lord, likewise precedes his beloved. And after her death he proclaims his belief in her divinity, and in the desire of Christ for her presence in heaven :

<sup>1</sup> It should be generally recognised that the ideas and convictions of the genius are likewise the pattern for the future potential life of humanity.

<sup>2</sup> *La Vita Nuova*. Translation by D. G. Rossetti.

Beatrice is gone up into high Heaven,  
 The Kingdom where the angels are at peace,  
 And lives with them : and to her friends is dead.  
 Not by the frost of winter was she driven  
 Away, like others ; nor by summer-heats,  
 But through a perfect gentleness instead.  
 For from the lamp of her meek lowlihood  
 Such an exceeding glory went up hence  
 That it woke wonder in the Eternal Sire,  
 Until a sweet desire  
 Entered Him for that lovely excellence,  
 So that He bade her to Himself aspire ;  
 Counting this weary and most evil place  
 Unworthy of a thing so full of grace.<sup>1</sup>

And the *Vita Nuova* ends with the words :

Wherefore if it be His pleasure through whom is  
 the life of all things, that my life continue with  
 me a few years, it is my hope that I shall yet write  
 concerning her what hath not before been written  
 of any woman. After the which, may it seem  
 good unto Him who is the Master of Grace, that  
 my spirit should go hence to behold the glory of  
 my lady ; to wit, of that blessed Beatrice who  
 now gazeth continually on His countenance *qui  
 est per omnia seecula benedictus. Laus Deo.*

This devout hope and holy love was the inspiration  
 of one of the world's greatest poems, *La Divina  
 Commedia*. It is interesting to note the attitude of  
 the Church. In the words of Mr. Charles Williams : <sup>2</sup>

The language of the *Vita Nuova* was extreme and  
 dangerous. The Church officials got to work

<sup>1</sup> *La Vita Nuova*. Rossetti's translation.

<sup>2</sup> *The Descent of the Dove*, p. 139.

on it. They cut all references to Beatrice as "beatitude" and substituted "felicità" . . . they cut the profound allusion to the girl Giovanna going before Beatrice as John the Baptist went before the True Light. In short, they took immense care to alter the whole point of Beatrice; they laboured to explain that this was merely an ordinary love-affair, and that no love-affair could be more than an illuminated love-affair.

Here, again, the Church is at infinite pains to dethrone Eros, and rob him of his divinity.

Rossetti, whose type of imagination led him continually to the passionately idealistic poets of the Renaissance, created an infinitude of beauty, both in painting and in poetry, from his conception of love, which has sometimes, by critics not understanding the full implications of a transcendental humanism, been dismissed as sensual, or, in some obscure way, as spiritually sensual or sensually spiritual. But in point of fact, Rossetti's love-poetry is sensual only in the sense that *The Song of Songs* may be considered so.<sup>1</sup> "Thy soul I know not from thy body." "Nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul." In the following stanza from Sonnet IV in *The House of Life* he speaks as only poetry can, and may, of the divine-human aspect of deep love:

I was a child beneath her touch—a man  
 When breast to breast we clung, even I and she—  
 A spirit when her spirit looked through me,  
 A god when all our life-breath met to fan  
 Our life-blood, till love's emulous ardours ran,  
 Fire within fire, desire in deity.

<sup>1</sup> I am excluding here the mystical interpretation of this poem as an exposition of the union of Christ and the Church.



Rossetti is the unique example of the poet whose words flame with the painter's colours, whose pictures are visible poetry. In this respect, he was the greatest of the pre-Raphaelites, whose search for consummate beauty never flagged, whose life was surrendered utterly to his art. Sonnet XXIII is a picture as vivid as any of his paintings :

There came an image in Love's retinue  
That had Love's wings and bore his gonfalon :  
Fair was the web, and nobly wrought thereon,  
O soul-sequestered face, thy form and hue !  
Bewildering sounds, such as Spring wakens to,  
Shook in its folds ; and through my heart its power  
Sped trackless as the immemorable hour  
When birth's dark portal groaned and all was new.

But a veiled woman followed, and she caught  
The banner round its staff, to furl and cling,  
Then plucked a feather from the bearer's wing,  
And held it to his lips that stirred it not,  
And said to me, " Behold, there is no breath :  
I and this Love are one, and I am Death."

The nature-poetry in *The House of Life* pulses with the ardours and the pains of love ; nature's beauties and the indefinable poignant love-longings are one, giving to the pictures of woodland and sea the vividness that is born only of an intense love-consciousness :

A little while, a little love  
The scattering autumn hoards for us  
Whose bower is not yet ruinous  
Nor yet unleaved our songless grove.  
Only across the shaken boughs

We hear the flood-tides seek the sea,  
 And deep in both our hearts they rouse  
 One wail for thee and me.

Yet it seems likely that there was in Rossetti's conception of love, as with Keats and Chopin, a quality which made life on earth intolerable, and it was this tension that drove him to the form of escape which proved fatal, and accounted for his early death. The balance is gossamer-delicate: over-idealisation of love brings its own dangers. *This* is the type of love "not to be actualised, or, if actualised, fatal," the "self-annihilating paradox" which leads to despair.<sup>1</sup> But there is a greater love, not destined to final tragedy in the world; perfect love here and now is possible. The romantic love celebrated by the pre-Raphaelites, and many other poets of similar calibre, is doomed to disaster, but not the love found and magnificently trusted by Browning and Elizabeth Barrett. Their love and marriage is the triumphant answer to despair. There was in these two poets a sanity and wholeness, a burning faith in the final values, which divorces them temperamentally from the poets to whom love, though a powerful source of inspiration, inevitably proved finally destructive.

Swinburne, like Rossetti, wrote most readily of the nostalgia and grief of love, his poetry exquisitely inwoven also with nature-imagery, as in *The Triumph of Time* :

It will grow not again, this fruit of my heart,  
 Smitten with sunbeams, stricken with rain.  
 The singing seasons divide and depart,  
 Winter and summer depart in twain.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 57.

It will grow not again, it is ruined at root,  
The bloodlike blossom, the dull red fruit.  
And in the lovely lines in *Hesperia* :  
Is it thither the wind's wings beat ? Is it hither to me,  
O my sweet ?  
For thee, in the stream of the deep tide-wind blowing  
in with the water,  
Thee I behold as a bird borne in with the wind from  
the west. . . .

And my heart yearns baffled and blind, moving vainly  
toward thee, and moving  
As the reflux seaweed moves in the languid exuberant  
stream,  
Fair as a rose is on earth, as a rose under water in  
prison,  
That stretches and swings to the slow passionate pulse  
of the sea.

It seems often with Rossetti and Swinburne, and other poets of similar type, that love was overmuch a preoccupation : love sought *as an end in itself*, not as a means to rich life and creative power. Whereas with Browning, as with Shakespeare, though the sovereignty of love is never disputed, and in Browning certainly is given the highest honours, yet they, greater poets far than Rossetti or Swinburne, and possibly mainly for this reason, were careful always to relate love *to the whole of life*, and worshipped it as the god of power. Which applies equally to Dante, whose allegiance to love was never a weak submission, but always a strong loyalty leading to highest achievement. The love-poetry of Rossetti and Swinburne tends to weaken ; it never stirs to courageous thought or

action. Always it savours faintly of the love that leads not to life, but to death.

Of all English poets, John Donne perhaps wrestled most profoundly with the metaphysics of love, his powerful intellect constantly urging him to apply reason to the most unreasoning of human emotions. He left no aspect of love unexplored, with the inevitable result that his poems abound in intricacies and contradictions, and reflect an infinite variety of incompatible moods and reactions. Sometimes he desires to live only in the ideal world created by himself and his love ; sometimes he praises the delights of physical love, desiring no deeper spiritual intrusion ; sometimes he wishes to rise wholly above and beyond sex, and sometimes bids love farewell, weary of the stress and tension of a life so irrational and beyond the reach of the intellect, and always he analyses, dissects, passionately seeks to understand, and finally maintains that although love has its root in sex, yet it can rise to a point where sex is transcended, and this is the highest love. It is only possible, he asserts, to understand the nature of true love if one is able to rise above its physical basis.<sup>1</sup>

Love's mysteries in souls do grow  
But yet the body is his book—

the understanding of both soul and body is crucial.

Again, Lyly, as Professor Wilson Knight points out in his essay in *The Review of English Studies* (April, 1939), is supremely a poet of metaphysical, but also of romantic, love, continually preoccupied with its problems, contradictions and complexities :

<sup>1</sup> See especially *The Good-morrow*, *The Dream*, *The Ecstasy*, *The Undertaking*, *The Primrose*, *Air and Angels*.

Love . . . is his whole theme. He is as aware as Spenser of its complexities ; he is more aware than Spenser of its inward contradictions. His understanding is at once purer and more realistic. . . .

Lyly's love-apprehension is new and striking. His faith in the naked impulse of sexual attraction is exceptionally pure and independent of all moralisings. He is more interested in studying and projecting the impulse than in judging its results. . . . His conflicts are subtle and intricate with no easy black and white solutions. . . . After the rigid centuries of moral theology, Lyly faces instead the mystery of human personality most intensely known in eros-perception in all its paradox and irrationality (pp. 5, 10, 11, 12).

It is in Browning, however, as, perhaps in no other poet, that human and divine love are most perfectly reconciled ; the manner of his acceptance, or recognition, of the great truth underlying human love is unique, so that often it is difficult to understand whether he writes of Eros or of Agapé. And it is significant that, in its totality, his work is innocent of the torturing quality, the sense of baffled frustration, which so often twists and contorts the poetry of metaphysical love. Elizabeth Barrett, too, in her brave and humble love-poems of gratitude and thankfulness, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, made clear the human-divine nature of love as she knew it, choosing to live courageously on earth, enriching the bleak world through her love :

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,  
Face to face, drawing nigh and nigher,



Until the lengthening wings break into fire  
 At each curved point—what bitter wrong  
 Can the earth do to us, that we should not long  
 Be here contented ? Think. In mounting higher  
 The angels would press on us, and aspire  
 To drop some golden orb of perfect song  
 Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay  
 Rather on earth, Beloved—where the unfit  
 Contrarious moods of men recoil away  
 And isolate pure spirits, and permit  
 A place to stand and love in for a day  
 With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

And again, when she recognises the transforming  
 power of love for every creature :

. . . There's nothing low  
 In love, when love the lowest, meanest creatures  
 Who love God, God accepts while loving so.  
 And what I *feel*, across the inferior features  
 Of what I *am*, doth flash itself, and show  
 How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

This recalls Browning's words :

God be thanked, the meanest of His creatures  
 Boasts two soul-sides, one to greet the world with,  
 One to show a woman when he loves her.

In Sonnet VI she declares her faith in the power of  
 love to conquer time and space, too often the lover's  
 bitterest enemies :

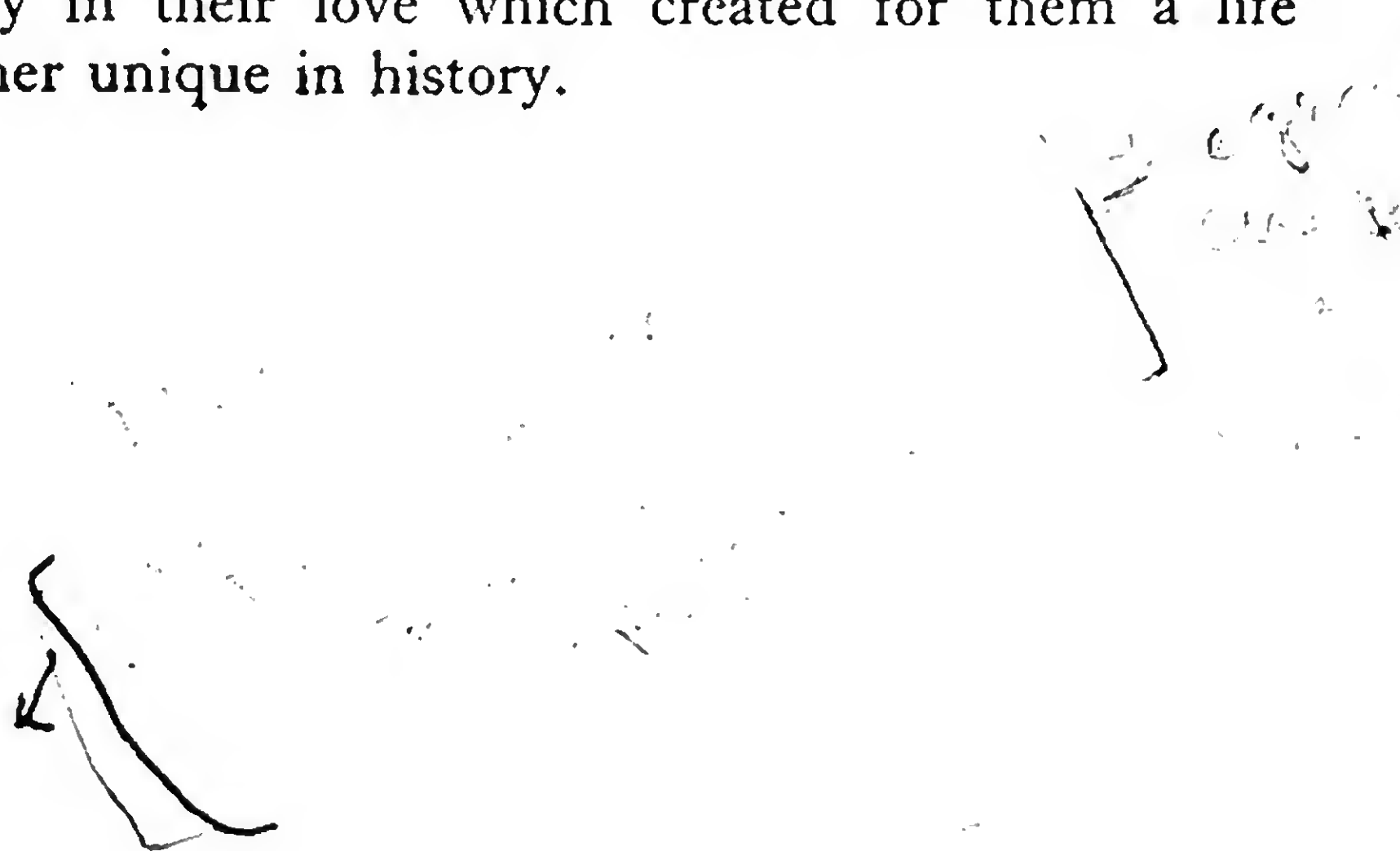
Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand  
 Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore  
 Alone upon the threshold of my door  
 Of individual life, I shall command  
 The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand

Serenely in the sunshine as before,  
Without the sense of that which I forbore . . .  
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land  
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine  
With pulses that beat double. What I do  
And what I dream include thee, as the wine  
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue  
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,  
And meets within my eyes the tears of two.

Both in her and in Browning an indomitable spirit of love and courage and faith burned, a brave acceptance of whatever suffering experience might exact, an integrity and a fortitude that compelled them to create beauty and truth from every difficult vicissitude. And this quality in their lives, and hence in their work, was due to one cause alone, a cause not found in the lives and work of the secular, sometimes pagan, poets.

Your love has been to me like God's own love,  
which makes the receivers of it kneelers,

Elizabeth Barrett wrote to Browning, and this was the quality in their love which created for them a life together unique in history.



### CHAPTER III

## LOVE AND ASCETICISM

“ That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”—Gospel according to St. John iii, 6.

JESUS’S words seem to stress the fundamental antithesis which lies at the root of ascetic doctrine. Yet here there is no suggestion that the flesh is *evil*, only that it is *different*, different in kind, essentially divorced from spirit (which, as I have pointed out earlier,<sup>1</sup> is, in a sense, true). The passage occurs during the conversation with Nicodemus, and really refers to the fact of spiritual, as opposed to physical, birth. The misunderstanding of Nicodemus, the “ master of Israel,” is fundamental, and common. “ We speak what We do know, and testify that We have seen ; and ye receive not our witness.”

The origins of asceticism lie far back in religious history, and belong by no means exclusively to Christian and Biblical teaching. Buddhism emphasises strongly the need for “ detachment ” (which is really the root-principle of asceticism), even more strongly than Christianity, although it seems there can be no stronger words than :

If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

<sup>1</sup> pp. 50, 51.

The word "hate" is possibly used to give full emphasis to the idea of detachment from creaturely ties ; it so palpably conflicts with Jesus's message of love. Sometimes, when concepts are difficult of definition, only a dramatic over-emphasis can help to give understanding.

Asceticism is usually taken to mean rigorous control of and abstention from sexual life, withdrawal from the world and worldly pleasures, and also a steeling of the heart against all creaturely claims and affections. The deepest meaning however, as in all ethical and moral doctrines, goes much further, and has infinitely wider implications ; there is inevitably much of the ascetic in all deeply religious persons, certainly in religious geniuses and leaders ; the best types understand asceticism in its good aspects and are compelled to embrace many of its ideals. It is always highly important to distinguish between the narrow general interpretations of the various ideals and doctrines that attract constructive thinkers and the deep actual significance of these ideals. In common thought, morality, for example, has one meaning only : sexual morality ; the philosopher, however, rarely thinks of it in this narrow sense at all : his concern is with the *whole* of life, of which sex is only a *part*. It is important to recognise this in a world so sex-ridden that it would too often seem that sex, not God, moves the Universe. [The dangerous overstressing of the importance of sex has led to the disastrous misapprehensions and subsequent tragedies that blot and pollute the history of man's development] Once assign to sex its proper place in human life, and man will move towards a new, hitherto unglimped, freedom. But to assign to sex its "proper place" is apparently the hardest



thing to do : so hard as to seem almost impossible. The first step towards such an understanding involves a complete reversal of the usual attitude. The subject must be approached with *reverence*. Rather than condemning sex as evil—the basic view of asceticism—it should be worshipped as a divine life-force, through which man co-operates with God in creativeness. In this matter, the primitive peoples, and the savages of to-day, are nearer the truth than civilised man. Certainly the Garden of Eden story suggests that all evil is involved with sex-knowledge, for after Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit of the Tree they knew they were naked, and were ashamed. But the fruit of the Tree gave knowledge of good also.

The Eden-myth is symbolical of the life of every man : in childhood there is no sense of shame ; shame is born with the birth of sex-consciousness, and the child is driven out of his perfect garden into the world of knowledge of good and evil. Enlightenment, and a return to the garden can come, but only and always through a proper understanding of *love* and a deep sense of the sacramental. To the sacramental, the deeply religious, view, sex is one of the most sacred aspects of human life, sex as a vital element in the divine-human emotion of love between man and woman—a vital *element* in this love, *but not the whole*. In love, as in life, sex, though powerful, sometimes even overwhelming, is not *predominant*. The truth, as always, is a paradox. I have said elsewhere<sup>1</sup> that “ It would be safe to say that all our troubles originate in a misunderstanding of sex,” which suggests that sex is all-powerful, but this is not necessarily so at all, the misunderstanding may precisely lie in the *belief* in

<sup>1</sup> *Browning and Modern Thought*, p. 48.



its immense importance. In love also, as I have suggested earlier in this book,<sup>1</sup> the spiritual and romantic element plays a greater part than actual sexual desire. And while a successful physical basis to marriage is of vital importance, yet that basis cannot support a union through the years of late maturity and old age, when the needs of the mind and the spirit grow increasingly pressing, urgent and undeniable. In youth, for obvious biological reasons, the successful sex-background suffices ; not so in middle age, which accounts for the failure of so many marriages which in youth seemed ideal. Only the "marriage of true minds," founded on a common life-purpose, a desire to serve life more completely than by the begetting of children alone, can survive the long years of maturity and old age. Which suggests perhaps that two marriages, one for the physically creative, another for the mentally and spiritually creative years, should be the rule.

It has generally been conceded that celibacy is in some individual instances essential. Men, and indeed women also, may find themselves the instruments through which some specialised purpose is to be achieved, and such an awareness of vocation often tends to suggest the necessity for a life so dedicated that no time remains for the absorbing claims of marriage, and home and family life. This, again, is apparently the significance of Jesus's words about "hating" the ties of family when there is a clear call to a different order of living. Buddha accepted this necessity to the extent of leaving his home immediately on the birth of his son, to avoid the danger of emotional entanglement with child and mother. However, the

<sup>1</sup> Chapter I, Section 2.

solution to so difficult a problem lies, as always, in a proper understanding of love, the relation of love to life as a whole, and the relation of both to God. In such love, there is never danger of preoccupation. God is supreme, devotion to Him primary ; the claims of love, and of life on earth, flower from, are never opposed to, this devotion. The principle is that of seeking *first* the Kingdom of God, and the rest—the inspiration and power, joys and fulfilments of human love—are added as a result, and human love, human life, are seen and loved as aspects of God's own love for man, and man's love for Him. There is no other solution ; it is therefore vain to look for any other. In the light of such an understanding, such a surrender, the question of celibacy or acceptance of the married state does not arise ; either are acceptable to God ; in such a life, there is room and to spare for the beauty of human emotion and creative human relationships, neither can detract, or distract, from the love for the Source of all that is beautiful and creative. Divine love is infinitely inclusive ; so also is human love in the lives of those who have been touched by the spirit of Christ.

Celibacy may be well enough so long as the true mate has not been found, but once found, the " marriage of true minds " should be consummated, and would always be, were life on earth less hedged about with the thickets wrought of the results of the errors of past decisions, the past actions of an immature self. Yet it may be that the errors and their results indeed contribute to the building of the mature self, and in this light, all can be seen as creative. Possibly this is the ultimate wisdom ; it were well to think so, in a world so obviously torn by hideous disharmonies, so

destroyed by error and dominated by fear. Nevertheless, the power to create good from or through evil seems always to lie with the individual, and many appear to lack the capacity. According to St. Paul :

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called ; and whom He also called, them He also justified : and whom He justified, them He also glorified.<sup>1</sup>

But this raises the difficult and controversial problem of predestination in its acutest form, and it is not my concern here to engage in theological debate. I simply put the question once again.

Since " love is the divinely appointed means of our return to God during existence," the union of man and woman cannot logically be a deterrent from the love of God, and in the true marriage, the union of not only bodies but dedicated souls, the mutual life-work, the vocation, of the lovers is of primary importance to both. Therefore neither would allow the marriage-bond, or the claims of family and home life, to stand in the way of the other's development. Instead, their mutual love, and the comfort of their union, would immensely enrich their creative capacity. Heloise did not understand this when she refused to impose the " restrictions " of marriage on Abelard. Plainly she said :

<sup>1</sup> *Epistle to the Romans* viii, 28-30.



Putting aside for the moment this hindrance to philosophic study, consider the estate itself of honourable matrimony. ✓ What agreement is there between pupils and waiting-women, desks and cradles, books or writing-tablets and distaffs, styles or pens, and spindles? Who, in short, when he is intent upon sacred or philosophic meditations, can bear the squalling of babes, the lullabies of the nurses soothing them, the noisy troop of men and women of the household? And who will be able to tolerate the perpetual and disgusting uncleanness of very small children? ✓ . . . The eminent philosophers of the past, utterly despising the world, not so much forsaking the age as fleeing from it, forbade themselves all pleasures, that they might repose in the embraces of philosophy alone.<sup>1</sup>

In the fulfilment of the deepest love, the love of dedicated lovers, these problems, though they might to a certain extent arise, would be miraculously solved, inevitably so, because such love of its very nature cannot fail to resolve all difficulties, creating from every potential discord harmony. In the deepest love there are, finally, no "problems," which also applies to the dedicated life. The appearance of problems is an illusion, due to myopic and distorted vision, although it is true in such lives that for a long period the waves of natural human desires crash tumultuously against the breakwater of the higher knowledge, and it would seem that to call such experience illusory is indeed arbitrary. But the breakwater, finally, is more real than the assaulting waves.

<sup>1</sup> Enid McLeod, *Heloise : A Biography*.

The ascetics, in giving to sex and sexual temptation so predominant a place, were really, as any psychologist sees plainly, approaching the problem of dedication and detachment in precisely the wrong way. But, as Jung says :

We must never forget our historical premises. Only a little more than a thousand years ago, we stumbled from the crudest beginnings of polytheism into the midst of a highly developed, oriental religion which lifted the imaginative minds of half-savages to a height which did not correspond to their degree of mental development. In order to keep to this height in some fashion or other, it was unavoidable that the sphere of the instincts should be thoroughly repressed. Therefore, religious practice and morality took on an outspokenly brutal, almost malicious, character.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, it appears that it may have been necessary at a certain stage in man's religious development for him to impose on himself the most rigid disciplines, inflict on himself the most searing forms of self-torture. There is always a danger in a too-rapid development. The plunge from "the crudest beginnings of polytheism" into "the midst of a highly developed, oriental religion" probably was, as Jung suggests, a sudden step for which man was not properly prepared, and to which he was unable to adjust himself without abnormal reactions. Certainly the self-flagellations of the early Christian ascetics savour too strongly of pathological abnormality to be accepted as good by any healthy modern Christian. Yet the principle of power through sex-repression is constant throughout mystic

<sup>1</sup> *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, p. 125.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.



and religious philosophy, especially in Eastern thought. For example, Master Lu Tzu assured his disciples that :

{ Every man who unites bodily with a woman feels pleasure first and then bitterness ; when the seed has flowed out, the body is tired and the spirit languid. It is quite different when the adept lets spirit and power unite. That brings first purity and then freshness : when the seed is transformed, the body is healthy and free. .

This doctrine, familiar to all students of Eastern esotericism, is not far removed from the modern psychological principle of sublimation : transformation, transmutation of sexual power. It is, however, open to question, on several grounds, and is based on the belief that the complete sexual life is *in itself* evil and harmful. Again, Mr. Gerald Heard in *Pain, Sex and Time* refers to the actual techniques employed by the Hermetics :

they had derived from India, they generated their energy for the dilation of consciousness by sex sublimation—theirs was a celibate order—

and Master Lu Tzu constantly affirms that :

{ If . . . it (the sexual power) is not allowed to flow outward but is led back by the force of thought so that it penetrates the crucible of the creative and refreshes heart and body and nourishes them, that also is the backward flowing method. Therefore it is said : The meaning of the Elixir of Life depends entirely on the backward-flowing method.

The Elixir of Life. Small wonder that from the earliest days of creative thought man has believed in the regenerating and creative power of celibacy.<sup>1</sup> But the principle is still very imperfectly understood. It seems likely that the ancient Egyptians, the Greeks, and other peoples of the pre-Christian era came nearer to the deep inner truth in their worship of a Virgin Goddess not necessarily technically virgin ; in their understanding of priestesses who through union with specially-chosen men symbolised the *hieros gamos*, sacred marriage.<sup>2</sup> For these peoples believed that the divine power is manifested through the union of male and female, a far healthier belief than a doctrine stressing only the evil of physical creativeness. There is evidence, hitherto almost entirely unrecognised and consequently unexplored, that the clue to regeneration, non-physical creativeness, possibly the secret of life itself, need not necessarily lie in either of these doctrines, but in some third way. The first step towards this way lies in a *new* approach to the subject of sex, and a new understanding of love.

It is important to remember that sex *in itself* cannot be evil. Man's evil misunderstanding, his pitiful ignorance, of the significance of this tremendous force in human life has brought about evil, disease, degradation and sin. The primitives and the ancient peoples lived close to nature, and were able to penetrate her secrets. And the greatest of nature's laws are involved with creation, constant renewal and fertility, which in the animal and vegetable kingdom can come only through union.✕ The principle of

<sup>1</sup> Conversely, certain Indian religious sects believe it is a religious duty to have a son.

<sup>2</sup> For a full and most enlightened exposition of this subject see Dr. Esther Harding's *Woman's Mysteries*.

union, indeed, lies at the very root of any deep understanding of life's mysteries. { Without union there can be no creation. } Certainly the stern ascetics were aiming at union : they believed that union with God can come only through divorce from all creaturely claims. What they could not see was that the Creator-God had ordained for human beings the comfort and sweetness of human love and union, through which alone man could attain to his best development, and so discover at last the way to God. For God speaks through Eros, through the god of human love and suffering. If man hears in the voice of Eros the voice of the Tempter it is because his life is falsely orientated. In the deepest sense, there is no " temptation " for the true initiate. Suffering there is, for without suffering there can be no growth, but a suffering suffused with light. The priestesses of the Moon of the ancient religions understood the sacred nature of love, and yielded themselves, their sex, their lives, to the love-principle. The fact that these priestesses were psychologically not physiologically virgin is deeply significant. As Dr. Harding makes clear : <sup>1</sup>

the term " virginity " must refer to a *quality*, to a subjective state, not to a physiological or external fact. It cannot be used as denoting a factual situation, for the quality of virginity persists in some unexplained fashion in spite of sexual experience, child-bearing, and increasing age.

Such a *quality* of virginity, of innate chastity, cannot be " explained " ; it can only be apprehended and understood if there is the necessary receptiveness to such apparent contradictions. To the pure all is ultimately

<sup>1</sup> *Woman's Mysteries*, p. 77.



pure, and psychological chastity, to use the most convenient term for a difficult concept, is not a matter of physical experience. These truths are by certain people *instinctively known*, in direct contradiction to rational knowledge, as they are perfectly aware. But study of the ancient myths, the deep psychological truths that have existed always in the depths of man's thinking, reveals that such instinctive knowledge is the only knowledge that can be considered finally valid.

I quote here from an autobiographical novel by a writer who wishes to remain anonymous :

I have long outgrown my girlhood, but the years of marriage have taught me nothing my soul needed to know, and still I am virgin, still worshipping love's innocence. . . . What is there to learn from passion, from sexual love? It was a lesson taught to a child of nineteen, a simple lesson indeed compared with the complexities the years have taught me to call love. There is another passion, burning with an ardent blue flame . . .

In the understanding of this "other passion" lies the clue to the healing of man's emotional, and so physical, ills. Neither the thoughtless, instinctive passion of youth nor the disembodied spiritual passion of age is the ideal, but a perfectly poised blending of the two.

The necessity for modern life, for a regeneration of wholeness, a new influx of power, is not a denial or rigid refusal of sex, but a new understanding, a dedication and sanctification. And this new understanding can come only through a conception of life as sacramental. In every sphere the materialistic values have temporarily conquered : science and Freudian psy-

a relig  
ce em

chology between them have <sup>satisfaction</sup> reduced love to simple biological terms, to a hunger comparable with the need for a satisfying meal. Indeed, it is commonly believed that the sexual need is no more and no less than the desire for "food," an assuagement of hunger, as simply physical and as essential to gratify. And although the ascetics and mystics are wrong in the assertion that sexual satisfaction brings with it bitterness, weariness and languor, it does remain true that this physical pleasure proves no more than an anodyne, leaving the deeper needs of the self unsatisfied, indeed, to a certain extent untouched. "The bitter and unslaking flesh" <sup>1</sup> yields no answer to the needs of the soul. The truth is that unless the sexual life is united with the deeper life of *love* there will, and can, be only frustration, a sense of disillusion, and, in the minds of the deeper thinkers, an uneasy sense of desecration. It is the need for *love* that should be stressed throughout life, and especially the need to *give* love; not, as at present, the continual stress on the need for sexual satisfaction. Here it must be said that social reformers, teachers, modern parents, in their confused questionings as to how best to give suitable sex-information to children and young people, have failed to understand that their difficulty lies in the *separation of sex from love*. The subject is approached and treated in the wrong way. First there should be the stress on *love*, to which no child fails to respond. Every child instinctively understands love; it is contact with the world that robs it of this innate understanding, of faith in love's power. Unfortunately, reformers, teachers, parents, are usually so pre-occupied with the "problem" of sex themselves, and

<sup>1</sup> Noel Essex, *Shade Tides*, p. 31.



often in the wrong way, that they are unable to realise that sex as such enters little, if at all, into a child's thoughts. The adult projects his own perplexities. For the child, there is no *meaning* in sex-differentiation. All is unquestioningly *accepted*, for although the child is constantly concerned with questions, with the "whys" of a new and wonderful universe, yet these questions are wholly innocent of the stress and anxiety which accompanies adolescent and adult problems. Suffering, in the true sense of the word, is unknown to the child, simply because it is accepted, if it comes, as a part of life no more remarkable, or thought-provoking, than the daily routine of meals, sleeping and waking, playing and learning. The *suffering* in suffering lies in the questionings as to its meaning, in the consciousness, "I suffer. Why do I suffer?" This consciousness is non-existent in the child. The child says, "I am sad," rarely, "I am unhappy." It is only the adolescent and the adult who adds: "Why am I sad? How unhappy I am." It seems fairly clear that the pain-consciousness develops concurrently with sex-consciousness.

Sex, to the average adult, is a vast problem, approached first in one way, then in another. And the problem as such exists because of the non-understanding of love. If love were understood, all else would be divinely clear. Nothing in all God's creation is simpler than love. Here, as in "problems" of faith, man has created his own difficulties. The fault lies neither with love nor with faith, but in man's own tormentingly complicated mind. And because of the adult's own anxiety and perplexity, the child is worried with information it has never demanded, made to create difficulties it would never have imagined. To

volunteer information on this subject, when the child has given no indication of needing it, is a grave violation of the child-mind. In the normal child, there is often a momentary interest in various sexual manifestations that come its way, but the interest is barely conscious, and certainly contains no element of *anxious* enquiry. The trouble begins when the adult tries to explain. With the adolescent, the situation is of course vastly different, and needs extremely sensitive and sympathetic treatment.

The child should be taught that love rules the world, for God is love, and that through love all miracles are possible, not least the miracle of sex, which is God's plan whereby man and all nature can co-operate in the vast scheme of eternal creation. With such a background, the "problem" resolves into the harmony which lies at the heart of the universe, and is approached with inevitable reverence and a solemn joy. Here, as elsewhere, it is the growth of irreligion that has created the difficulties and made of sex a dark haunting demon. There must be a revival of the *sense of the sacred*, the sense which the peoples of past ages, too often unthinkingly dismissed as ignorant, understood so well, even though in them it was associated with what we have come to regard as false worship and all sorts of fantastic taboos. But in every taboo, as in every symbol, there is a deep, and often deeply true, significance. In losing the sense of the sacred we have lost ourselves in a maze of darkness far deeper than the darkness of the primitives, a maze of materialism which leads only to a desert of despair. Life and the mysteries of the universe no scientist can satisfactorily explain, the explanations themselves leading always into deeper mystery.

The explanation lies in some dimension as yet unexplored.

Ouspensky has said <sup>1</sup> that the basic difficulty with human problems is that the questions are wrongly put, and that as soon as the fallacy *in the questions* is seen, the answer is apparent. This is profoundly true of the sexual problem, which has hitherto been considered only in isolation, divorced from the far deeper and wider concepts of *love and personality*. Children and young people should be taught not only *self-respect*, but respect for *all* life, not only human, although obviously human life is of primary importance. A sense of suitable reticence and reserve, a discouragement of promiscuous intimacy, is vital in the training of the child, not because of any sense of shame associated with the physical—such a sense must never be suggested, or allowed to develop—but because of the sacredness of personality and individuality. And this respect, this delicate reverence, must not be confined to the body alone: the child must learn delicately to approach the mind and souls of his companions. As yet this is a law most parents and adults have themselves to learn.

It is too readily assumed that the child “belongs” to the parent, who should therefore have access to the deepest recesses of his mind and heart. Innate reticence or reserve is condemned as “secretiveness.” And how many teachers are there who would think of approaching a child’s sensibilities with respect or reverence? The child is a thoughtless little animal not far removed from the savage, and must be treated accordingly. And the majority of child-psychologists have as yet imperfectly considered from this particular

<sup>1</sup> *A New Model of the Universe*, p. 332.

angle the delicacy and vulnerability of childhood, although they readily admit that the wounds of the early years condition every sort of adult neurosis. This is true, and it is also true that unless the child is taught the meaning of *the sacredness of personality* he is unlikely (unless he is by nature sensitised to such things) to avoid the dangers and disasters of promiscuity in later life.

We live in a period of transition, and transition is always dangerous. The pendulum has swung too far from Victorian prudery, and the moral laxity of the last thirty years, the unbalanced emphasis on sex encouraged beyond all reason by Freudian psychology and materialist philosophies generally, is responsible for even more suffering and confusion than the almost equally bad Victorian attitude. In morals, as in art and religion, the modern world is ripe for a Renaissance.

## II

"*Axel* : To-morrow, my beloved, I shall be the captive of your splendid body. Its delights will have chained up the pure energy that gives me courage at this moment.

"To become all-powerful a man must conquer every passion . . . subdue himself by detachment. If you cease to limit a thing in yourself, in other words, to wish for it, if so doing, you withdraw from it, it will come to you. For in your own pure will you hold the essence of all things.

" . . . Those who have dared . . . who have embraced with native confidence this fundamental law of detachment from the world, emancipating themselves by asceticism."—  
VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM.

Nowhere is there a more fundamental misunderstanding of the deep laws of life than in the problem of detachment, the severing of the heart and mind from all creaturely bonds, and the identification of sexual



fulfilment with bondage and sin. The Christian saints preach detachment from creatures as the first essential in attaining union with God ; the Buddhists and Eastern philosophers likewise : the renunciation of “ the world, the flesh and the devil ” is common to them all, and even among the pagan philosophers and “ magicians ” (in *Axel*, for example, the sage is not preaching a Christian philosophy) the same root-conviction, the same sharp dualism, is found : human love weakens, and inevitably distracts from, the fullest attainments possible through spiritual or some kind of other-worldly power. Among Christian mystics St. John of the Cross is the sternest of such teachers :

The reason for which it is necessary for the soul, in order to attain Divine union with God, to pass through the dark night of mortification of the desires and denial of pleasures in all things, is because all the affections which it has for creatures are pure darkness in the eyes of God, and, when the soul is clothed in these affections, it has no capacity for being enlightened and possessed by the pure and simple light of God if it cast them not first from it. . . .

And again :

Even as he that is in darkness comprehends not the light, so the soul that sets its affections upon creatures will be unable to comprehend God ; and, until it be purged, it will neither be able to possess Him here below, through pure transformation of love, nor yonder in clear vision.

Even if human love should be allowed to some, it must never be forgotten that such love moves on an

infinitely lower plane than Agapé, the love magnificently celebrated in St. Paul's famous passage in 1 Corinthians xiii. But such dualism is of its very nature opposed to the essential faith of all mysticism, which works inevitably and always towards unity. The sharp distinctions between human and divine love in Professor Nygren's *Agape and Eros*<sup>1</sup> have been readily accepted by the majority of Christian thinkers and teachers. But there is a new understanding of Christianity evolving in the spirit of modern man,<sup>2</sup> an understanding which allows of no such dualism, but sees human love as the stepping-stone to, and often indistinguishable from, the love that is divine. Among English poets, Browning was the greatest prophet of a new and vital Christianity, conditional on a fuller, deeper conception of love. The concept of a dualism between love and religion has arisen entirely from a misunderstanding of love's true nature. It has to be admitted that Christianity itself, or rather, the misunderstanding of Christ's teaching, is largely responsible. The pre-Christian era, rather than dethroning love, gave it highest honours, and its potentially divine nature was understood in precisely the way Christians as a whole have failed to grasp. Here and there saints of the Christian church have attained to a deeper wisdom, for example Francis of Assisi, whose whole concern was with love in the widest sense (a supra-personal, human-divine love evolved from an intense capacity for human love in all its sweetness and power) and St. Francis de Sales, who definitely proclaimed the gospel of the divinity of human love :

<sup>1</sup> Cf. especially p. 165 for a contrast of the two types.

<sup>2</sup> All the writings of Nicolas Berdyaev and G. Wilson Knight are concerned directly or indirectly with this renaissance. Count Keyserling stresses a similar necessity.

It is certainly not the meaning of religion to try and crush the noble inclinations given us by God, but rather to sanctify them through identifying them with the love of God and thus bringing them to completion.<sup>1</sup>

He instinctively understood the paradoxes and contradictions of human and divine love ; thus, for him there was no "problem," although his acute mind appreciated the perplexities which inevitably arise and persist in the minds of others. It was as if he described the soul's ascent to God rather in the form of a musical phrase, beginning with human love, passing through the agony of the renunciation of this love in the narrow, personal sense, to the climax : the experience of union with God, to an apprehension of the meaning of God's will, and then returning, through a profound purification, to that same human love, yet with a supreme difference, loving *through* love of God, loving "creatures" as God's creations, and seeing God revealed in and through them, no longer

hankering because the earthly ego hankers for and then enjoys selfish satisfaction, but rather for the will of the most beloved Father in Heaven Who has created all these good things and now wills that His child should have joy in them.<sup>2</sup>

It is noteworthy that it was St. Francis de Sales who attained to a perfect love-friendship relation with a woman, Madame de Chantal (St. Jeanne-Françoise de Chantal) ; through this experience no doubt came his deep understanding of truths which for the majority of men remain ever in the sphere of insoluble problems. The life of St. Francis of Assisi was similarly enriched

<sup>1</sup> Michael Müller, *St. Francis de Sales*, p. 177. <sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 176.

by his deep and enduring friendship with St. Clare, who founded the Order of the Poor Clares. Rufus Jones in his *Studies in Mystical Religion*, writes beautifully of this relationship, remarking that

a love had come into her life so wonderful and strange that we almost need a new word to name it. It was a mystical love whose roots were in the invisible and eternal, and which drew both lives not so much to each other as to the one Fountain of love and to their common tasks of love (p. 159).

St. Francis of Assisi, although many later chroniclers with rigid views tried to prove him as ascetic as themselves, was a man of deep human sympathies and affections, enjoying, and believing that he should enjoy, the beauties and wonders of God's creation, not least, but greatest, among them this exquisite love-friendship with his ardent woman-disciple, whose influence was probably one of the most powerful, wholesome and beautifying forces in his life.

In *The Hound of Heaven* Francis Thompson also writes of the surrender of the soul to God, but he stops short where the understanding of St. Francis de Sales goes further. Thompson's poem describes in symbolical language the ascent of the soul, the renunciation of all earthly ties and loves, indeed, the forced renunciation of such ties, and finally the great moment of surrender, but it says nothing of the vitally important return to human life. Francis Thompson did not, perhaps could not, write as St. Francis de Sales wrote :

I believe that all, with the exception of God, is nothing to me any longer : but in Him and for Him I love more tenderly than ever what I love.



. . . What joy to love without fear of exaggeration ! There is never the least to fear when one loves in God.<sup>1</sup>

This is the heart of Agapé : the spirit of divine love infusing every impulse of human love, transfiguring every passion of the heart with the divine soul-light that alone can bring to birth the love that knows no fear. Human love unsanctified by this spirit is doomed to fear, and thence to disaster, since fear of its very nature holds the seeds of disaster, which, rapidly maturing in the fear-possessed mind, themselves bring to birth the very conditions that were dreaded, and inevitably end in disaster. This law operates through a certain psychic magnetism as yet very imperfectly understood.<sup>2</sup> Fear is as creative of evil as love is creative of good. Love and fear are at diametrically opposite poles, though in immature love they often seem to contend for mastery. But St. John knew that *perfect* love inevitably casts out fear, and that " he that feareth is not made perfect in love." Love is equated with light ; fear and hatred (for hatred is only another form of fear), with darkness. Darkness is the very archetype and visible manifestation of the evil spirit of fear : <sup>3</sup>

If we say that we have fellowship with God, and

<sup>1</sup> Michael Müller, *St. Francis de Sales*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> Though the European war which began in 1939 is perhaps the most outstanding example in all history of the disastrous effects of fear, and the lengths to which it will drive not only individuals, but nations.

<sup>3</sup> Here, again, there is much to be deduced from the darkness that descended on Europe, the enforced " black-out," and the long and elaborate preparations and precautions that preceded the outbreak of war. In the words of Max Plowman (*War and the Creative Impulse*, p. 75) : " There is a preparation to meet the devil which he accepts as a personal invitation." But this law, again, is not understood.

walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.<sup>1</sup>

Fellowship is love ; to walk in love is to walk with God in the light. The references throughout the New Testament to light and darkness are too many and too various, too clear in their meaning, to allow of any misconceptions. For example :

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.<sup>2</sup>

. . . Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth) . . . and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore nothing is so vitally important as a proper understanding of love, and almost invariably this understanding can grow only from a rightly-accepted human love-experience. Here the truth is a deep mystery. Eros is rightly equated with the Third Person of the Trinity, and it would be safe to say that all our human ills arise from a misunderstanding of the nature of love. I cannot do better here than point to Professor Wilson Knight's magnificent exposition of this theme in *The Christian Renaissance*, especially in the chapters "Eros," "The Eternal Triangle" and "The Sacred Birth." It is tragically true that

The Eros in man to-day is doubly portcullised in dark bondage, and, crying for liberation, it finds no champion for its cause save in poetry and the

<sup>1</sup> First epistle of John i, 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Gospel according to St. John iii, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians v, 8, 9, 11.

arts. . . . Vast areas of misery . . . are to be directly related to our refusal to recognise the royalty due to this passionate God of Love (pp. 334-335).

Likewise :

(if) such a divine Eros, in beauty of eye and limb, (were) to replace in our visionary thinking that third spectral figure in our 'Trinity, untold millions, their inmost souls hungering for a warm and human, not a ghostly, love, would have found release there, and happiness (p. 335).

Paradoxically, it might seem, this release, this understanding of the royalty and divinity of the God of Love, would, while unlocking the gate of the lost Eden and revealing the long-forsaken garden where the joys and wonders of individual human love may be known in their fullness, also show the way to a yet fuller life, a yet richer love / where "there is neither bond nor free, *there is neither male nor female* because all are 'one in Christ Jesus.'" <sup>1</sup>

### III

Although in his interesting book, *The Poet and Society*, Mr. Philip Henderson writes much that is of interest about the unique poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, his analysis lacks the final understanding essential in dealing with issues so complex, with a nature so profound and difficult. The study of a poet like Hopkins is of first importance to my main theme, but it demands a certain similarity, or innate capacity for comprehension, in the student—which is of course

<sup>1</sup> Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians iii, 14.

true of all criticism or study of real value or profundity. Mr. Henderson reveals the lack of this innate comprehension when he says :

. . . all that we know of Hopkins's life and work gives us the impression of a passionate and frustrated nature struggling with self-imposed shackles (p. 121).

The first point here is that the shackles are not "self-imposed," nor are they, strictly speaking, "shackles." Those who are "bound in the spirit," to use St. Paul's words, are not conscious of any bondage. The service of God is the only perfect freedom. And with so passionate a servant as Gerard Hopkins the so-called shackles have been imposed, not by himself, but by God. The second point is that although Hopkins's nature was unquestionably passionate—evidenced clearly enough by his magnificent and powerful poetry—it was frustrated only in ways not here understood. The desire to serve God wholly, the passion for the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, inevitably brings a sense of deep frustration, but this is far removed from human frustrations.

Again, Mr. Henderson says :

. . . the keen-fastidious and super-subtle sensations that he demanded from life could only have found satisfaction in denial, for in any attempt to fulfilment they would inevitably have lost their edge, their ecstasy. So that his self-denial was in itself a form of voluptuousness, but a voluptuousness grown so fine that physical indulgence would have meant vulgarisation of its pure essence (pp. 122-123).

There is a certain psychological subtlety and also a



certain æsthetic subtlety here, but close investigation reveals a confusion of thought, and certainly a lack of understanding of the nature of the religious genius, the pre-destined saint. This sort of psycho-analytical approach to the problems of sainthood would attribute all sacrifice, all denial, to masochism. But, as I have explained elsewhere,<sup>1</sup>

All the passion, the burning intensity, that in other men would have found an outlet in human relationships was in Hopkins transmuted into a passion for God and for nature ; by no means a *substitute* for human emotion, nor even exactly a sublimation, to use the favourite word of psychotherapy, but the intensely real *transmutation* possible only to certain types. Any sense of human loss is *eventually* itself lost in an overwhelming sense of power.

Moreover, Hopkins clearly *experienced* the "keen-fastidious super-subtle sensations," he did not merely demand them and find no satisfaction. This his poetry plainly declares. There is no sense of frustration or denial in, for example, *Pied Beauty*, *Hurrahing in Harvest*, *God's Grandeur*, or *That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection*, and the famous poem *The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo* explains why : the passionate delight in beauty, all the "super-subtle sensations" are given "back to God, beauty's self and beauty's giver."

It is the "intensely real transmutation" I have spoken of that is difficult for the uninitiated to understand, and very naturally, for these things are mysteries : the processes of the soul, and especially of the passion-

<sup>1</sup> *The Face of Truth*, p. 99.

Read by  
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ately religious soul, lie far below and beyond the range of rational analysis. It is impossible to describe in what manner, and by what means, human emotions can eventually be merged into emotions that are half-divine, how this deep purging process at last cleanses the feelings of human pain, leaving only a sense of boundless calm, of illimitable transcendent and transfiguring love. In such love no individual love is lost: the raindrop has merged with the ocean, not losing itself, though it would seem lost, but itself helping to form the magnitude of the ocean.

In speaking of a self-denial which in itself is a form of voluptuousness, Mr. Henderson touches on a perfectly real and subtle form of perversion, but such a perversion cannot be ascribed to Gerard Manley Hopkins. Despite his deep spiritual sufferings—perhaps because of them—he actually attained to a rare degree of psychological health, which, because so rare, tends always to appear abnormal.

Again, the suggestion of homo-sexuality in the reference to Father Hopkins's feeling for the little bugler in *The Bugler's First Communion* is arbitrary and without psychological foundation. Always there is the same fundamental error, the incapacity to understand the nature and quality of the poet's love, here accentuated to an acute degree because the poet is filled also with Agapé (God's love working through and in the human heart.) Here, also, the priest, the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. William Romaine Paterson in *The Passions of Life* gives a good, though not complete, definition of the love Agapé when he says: The passage from Corinthians i, 13, would no doubt be spoilt if the word "affection" were substituted, but that is obviously the meaning. Affection means applying oneself to another in that other's interest, and this is without doubt the meaning of the term in Christian ethic. It seems grotesque to extend to such an emotion the theory that every affection is

aspiring saint, grieves for the boy's lovely innocence, "breathing bloom of chastity in mansex line," which no doubt contact with the world will soil. *Therefore*, "let me see no more of him, and not disappointment. Those sweet hopes quell." A similar thought is expressed in the poem *Spring* :

Nothing is so beautiful as spring—

. . . . .

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning  
In Eden-garden. Have, get, before it cloy,  
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning  
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy. . . .

the grief of the saint, sorrow for the passing of innocence, for the coming taint of the world ; this is the reason why he would see no more of the young bugler, for whom he

Forth Christ from cupboard fetched, how fain I of feet  
To his youngster take his treat !  
Low-latched in lead-light housel his too huge godhead.

To attribute even a hint of homo-sexuality to such purged and selfless emotion would be in the nature of a blasphemy, but the complete lack of understanding only "an expression of the same instinctive movements which impel the sexes to their union." Where affection has entered love has been transformed. The element of personal disturbance has disappeared, and the self is no longer ego-centric. The stage of pure sympathy has been reached and sympathy means "suffering along with" our fellows. . . . In affection there is serenity and the self as an end in itself has been annihilated.

I have quoted this passage at some length because of the extreme importance of all and any definitions of this difficult concept. In some way, Agapé eludes precise definition, possibly because of its inclusiveness. The love of Eros is hard enough, indeed impossible enough, of definition, but almost simple compared with the twin-love Agapé. Mr. Paterson excludes the strictly divine element when he defines it *solely* as "affection."



absolves it from this sin. To the thoughtful man few things are sadder than the loss of the "breathing bloom of a chastity" in young people, which loss inevitably occurs with the transition from childhood to adolescence. It is clear that the development of sex-consciousness is responsible. Too much can be deduced from the change in the eyes of children concurrent with this development. The frank, wondering, trustful look changes to a narrowing of the glance, uneasy, half fearful, almost suspicious, as if the child were caught on some guilty enterprise. The voice, too, changes, loses the eager, happy note, the cadences are levelled to a monotone. And this pitiful change occurs, not because of the development of sexual awareness in itself, but because of the manner in which the subject is presented to the growing child. ~~He~~ becomes aware of sex as a shameful secret; with that awareness grows the realisation that he is trapped in a situation unsought and undesired, yet guiltily recognised now as fatally alluring, from which there is no possible escape, and for which imprisonment he is somehow, quite unjustly, blamed. So the sense of sin, of injustice, of guilt, increases, conflicting tormentingly with the irresistible lure. And on every hand he encounters conspiracies to increase this bewildering emotion. This is the "fall from innocence" analogous to the Fall in Eden-garden, the tragedy re-enacted in every human life, the revelation of sinful "nakedness." But the sin lies, not in sex, but in man's sinful attitude to sex. The flesh itself cannot be evil; had it been evil, could the Son of God have housed in flesh his divine spirit? <sup>1</sup> All sex-evil,

<sup>1</sup> This argument is advanced in Miss Evelyn Frost's book, *Christian Healing*, p. 17.



and perhaps, indeed, all evil (for it may yet be proved that *all* evil has a sexual origin), derives from this idea of the sinfulness of the flesh.

Mysticism of the best type—of the type admirably described in William Kingsland's treatise *Rational Mysticism*—invariably rejects the flesh-spirit dualism, constantly affirming the doctrine that not a subjugated but a sublimated physical body is the ideal: flesh transfigured by the impact of spirit; raised to the level of spirit, the nature of man led upwards to a participation in the Divine Nature. And though the ways may be various, the way of human love is the surest: there the brightest illumination pierces the dark places of controversy and doubt, for in a quite real sense the experience of love is in itself a mystical experience, resolving all dualisms, answering without words the most complex questionings, suddenly showing the things of earth "apparelled in celestial light." And, contrary to common belief, this is an illumination that need never "fade into the light of common day" if the love is rightly directed.

Mr. Charles Williams in his interesting study, *The Descent of the Dove*, makes a clear distinction between the two conflicting ways of mystical thought, the Negative Way and the Affirmative Way. Of the exponents of the Negative Way, St. John of the Cross is possibly the most notable example. It is hard, however, to reconcile the denials of the flesh, the horror of matter, with a belief in a Creator who looked on His creation and "saw that it was good." The exquisite simplicity in complexity of the human body, the delicious perfection of each minutest detail, cries out for worship of a loving and meticulous Creator. And nothing is more finally beautiful, nothing more

skilfully devised, than the means whereby man is enabled to participate in God's passion for physical creation. Yet only the sanctification of love can reveal the beauty of sex ; to the unconditionally secular view nothing is more common, more debased. To the deepest understanding, the revulsion is never from sex or sexual union, but from any such union unsanctified by the love of the soul. This has always been understood by the greatest men, as, for example, when Beethoven wrote in his journal :

Sensual enjoyment without a union of souls is bestial and will always remain bestial ; after it one experiences not a trace of noble sentiment but rather regret.

In one pregnant sentence Mr. Charles Williams defines the human-divine quality of love in perfection :

Christ was *anthropos* and *theos* ; so, after its kind, is human and romantic love.

He is speaking of Dante, perhaps the greatest example of the Affirmative Way in the whole history of love and religion. Negation must of its very nature prove abortive ; only affirmation fructifies and creates. With Dante, there was no usual physical creation, no physical intercourse with the beloved woman : the creation resulting from his love was of quite another nature, yet throughout his worship of Beatrice there was no hint that he despised or rejected the body that housed her adored soul, he rather glorifies and lauds that body *because* of the sweet spirit inhabiting it. There is finally no cleavage ; during the period of earthly life, soul and body are one, and, as Leonardo said :

Io credo che se l'anima piange e si lamenta quando  
si parte dal corpo, ciò non è senza ragione,

so close is the bond.

During the years of normal physical reproduction, the urge towards physical union is naturally strong, yet this union can prove the most barren of experiences, the very insistence on continual proximity with the beloved blinds to the knowledge that in succumbing to the desire a deep spiritual law is stretched almost to breaking-point. (The spirit needs always a degree of solitude.) (The goal and ultimate aim of lovers is to live always together.) Whether the attainment of the goal brings always the delight they anticipate is certainly open to question. Marriage can teach the ultimate inadequacy of this proximity, can prove how far from the final human goal physical love *in isolation* is. The fallacy inherent in the proximity-ideal has been discovered by the enlightened among the married, and those who are courageous enough to experiment, carving out for themselves a unique pioneer life through the rock of tradition, know that the final test of true love lies in the ability to live happily either together or apart, as work and circumstances demand. Even marriage itself must be subservient to the greater claims of life in its totality. And furthermore, not necessarily marriage, but the love "one and eternal, that leads to the Kingdom of God,"<sup>1</sup> is the true goal, and this, as Berdyaev points out, is

of a completely different order from the physiological life of sex and the social life of the family,<sup>2</sup>

although it must never be thought that the sexual life and the life of the family need necessarily prove a

<sup>1</sup> Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man*, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



*barrier* to the attainment of that love. This M. Berdyaev fails to make sufficiently clear. The ideal would certainly lie in a perfect synthesis : in a physical love transfigured by the sanctifying spiritual understanding, in a social and family life likewise irradiated. No ideal of love encouraging a divorce from human life can be good, the ideal must be the transfigured *human* life, not the discarnate spiritualised passion that rejects the human claims.

It is interesting to remember that with Dante Beatrice played the male, the impregnating rôle, while the poet was the receptive female element in the relationship in the first instance, only later, as in physical creation, becoming active and creating from the union the new life, the eternal life of his mighty art-form. This is a common phenomenon in the artist, connected with his, for him quite normal and inevitable, psychological bi-sexuality, and he must mourn the loss of his spring of inspiration as a woman the father of her children, without whom she is powerless to conceive. For this reason, love plays a dangerously vital rôle in the creative artist's life, its loss involving a more than personal deprivation, although with the greatest artists, such as Dante, there can never be a final "loss" : the death of Beatrice, and with Petrarch the failure of Laura to return his passion, in no way impeded the development of their art. The "pure spirit" or essential being of Beatrice and Laura transcended in their lovers' imagination all earthly limitations or apparent deprivations :

He who hath thus far had intelligence of love, and hath beheld all fair things in order and aright—he drawing near to the end of things lovable shall



behold a BEING marvellously fair, for whose sake in truth it is that all the previous labours have been undergone : One who is from everlasting, and neither is born nor perisheth, nor can wax nor wane.<sup>1</sup>

One of the great mysteries in this essentially mysterious world is the unwillingness of critics and commentators to accept the evidence the poets themselves abundantly provide ; in the main their function seems to be, not to elucidate the poet's message but by analysis and over-explanation to obscure it. A few years ago, the psycho-analytical investigation of poetry purported to have found the key to the poet's mind, forgetting that Freud himself admitted an element in artistic creation which lies beyond the reach of such analysis. The wise course would be to accept the poet's experience as revealed in his work as unique, individual, and valid in its own sphere. If the particular type of experience is foreign to, indeed non-comprehensible by, certain types of mind, this does not, as the critics would suggest, invalidate the experience in itself. This should be generally recognised, then critics and commentators would confine themselves to criticism of work which lay within the scope of their own particular type of understanding. Petrarch in his first sonnet (actually written last, as it were by way of explanation of the whole), insists that *only those who have experience of love* will hear with understanding ; from them only he hopes for pity and pardon :

ove sia chi *per prova intenda amore*  
spero trovar pietà, non che perdone.

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Symposium*.

For every type of mind there are other minds akin ; the confusion and difficulty arises always from the attempt to understand minds of a different cast. The differences are as real as any physiological dissimilarities, but because these psychological divergences occur at an invisible level (although their visible manifestations are certainly real enough), they are usually ignored and often contemptuously rejected. But not until psychological and emotional sympathies and antipathies and insurmountable divergences of personality are recognised will there be peace among human beings. The question is not, as I have frequently insisted, one of *better or worse*, simply of *difference*.

The suggestions that Hopkins " had to sustain his faith by a continual act of will," or that " there is something altogether over-ecstatic in all his stated beliefs to ring quite true " prove how impossible it is for the type of critic not temperamentally in sympathy with Hopkins's unusual psychological, emotional and spiritual constitution to make any adequate judgment. It has been suggested of Browning also that his constant protestations of courage, optimism and faith revealed his own lack of and desire for precisely these qualities,<sup>1</sup> but while there is a certain profound truth in the theory that in his work the creative artist ceaselessly wrestles with his own peculiar individual conflicts, and often affirms most passionately the ideals and beliefs he himself finds hardest to maintain, yet this, like all such theories, is only a half-truth. There must be, in the first instance, an instinctive trend towards certain ideals, certain beliefs, certain ways of life, which condition the artist's preoccupation with

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Browning and a Christian Renaissance*.—*Times Literary Supplement*, May 6, 1939.

them. To the initiate, the authentic note of spiritual torture rings as poignantly in Hopkins's agonised sonnets as the rapture of unconditional spiritual ecstasy in the lovely lyrics, *Hurrahing in Harvest*, *God's Grandeur*, *Pied Beauty*, *The Starlight Night*, and many others. Where is the "over-ecstasy," "the protest to self-persuasion" in the lines :

Look at the stars ! look, look up at the skies !  
 O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air !  
 The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there !  
 Down in dim woods the diamond-delves ! the elves'-  
 eyes  
 The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold  
 flares !  
 Wing-beat whitebeam ! airy abeles set on a flare !  
 Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare !

This is an outpouring of almost childlike delight in the glory of the starlit sky, pure and unforced as the exclaiming of a child, and as fantastically expressed. In one of his Journals (August 17, 1874) he writes of a similar experience reflecting in the words also the thought in *The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo*, "Give Beauty back to God, Beauty's self and Beauty's giver" :

As we drove home the stars came out thick : I leant back to look at them and my heart opening more than usual praised our Lord to and in whom all that beauty comes home.

Again, he reveals his passionate and simple joy in every aspect of nature in the words :

I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking

at. I know the beauty of Our Lord by it. Its inscape is mixed of strength and grace, like an ash-tree. The head is strongly drawn over backwards and arched down like a cutwater drawing itself back from the line of the keel. . . . Then there is the straightness of the trumpets in the bells softened by the slight entasis and by the square splay of the mouth.

This inclusive *sensuous* love is possible only to the man of purged and perfected sense. Such a man finds in every least manifestation of the natural world an ecstatic and fully sensuous delight denied to those whose pleasures are sensual and therefore circumscribed. This gives one of the clues to the important problem of celibacy.

W. J. Turner in his enlightened study of Beethoven, *The Search for Reality*, remarks that :

To be chaste, to remain chaste, not out of lack of desire, or inhibition from moral or social scruples, but out of intensity and quality of desire, *that* is almost incomprehensible. . . . This extraordinary enforced continence, this misery of the ideal is something which the ordinary man will find hardly imaginable. . . . But it is sublime and it is the beginning of the search for reality. . . . (p. 269).

He suggests—and this is tragically and magnificently applicable to all great artists—that finally there was no woman in the universe to whom Beethoven could have given himself. In other words, the range, intensity and depth of the great artist's love can never be embodied adequately in any object ; however satisfying the relationship he is left always with a



torturing surplus ; no actuality can ever be commensurate with the magnitude of the inner reality ; there is assuagement neither in action nor in speech, nor even in thought. Hourly he is destroyed and recreated by the intensity of the frustration, and it would seem that from the surplus, the frustration, the greatest works of art are born. The sense of ultimate inadequacy would be inherent even in so sublime a love as the Brownings, because it arises from the quality incommensurable with life on earth. An artist of Beethoven's gigantic stature would instinctively, inevitably, be driven to the loneliness he often in fact passionately regretted because of his temperamental incapacity to compromise, to accept anything less than the ideal.

In such types as Gerard Manley Hopkins, who embodied the qualities of both artist and saint, the resolution of such conflicts lies in an overmastering passion for religion and for nature, where alone gratification can be found. The love-ideal as such is finally transmuted. Thus it is not, as I have tried to make clear, a substitute for human emotion, nor even a sublimation, but a *transmutation* possible only to, but indeed inevitable to, certain types. That the process embraces agony both emotional and spiritual is clear :

O the mind, mind has mountains ; cliffs of fall  
 Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomèd. Hold them cheap  
 May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small  
 Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here ! creep  
 Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind : all  
 Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sonnet*, Poem No. 41.

## IV

Only the Quaker faith, it seems, has so far understood and accepted fully the meaning of the words "in Christ Jesus are neither male nor female," implicitly accepting the spiritual equality of men and women, and in thus understanding and accepting has removed, through so comprehensive a grasp of Christian principles, the sex-barrier which should not, indeed finally cannot, exist in the Christian life. The wide inclusive Christian love, Agapé, as I have so often pointed out,<sup>1</sup> transcends while including the more exclusive human love, Eros. St. Francis de Sales fully understood the Christian way of what is called by the psychologists sublimation. He knew that the man of holiness should be the man of whole-ness, accepting all the warring elements of his difficult nature as essential parts of the perfect design, and overcoming by transmutation all that is unruly and tormenting in human relationships.<sup>2</sup> The long and subtle process involved can scarcely be defined in clear-cut words : the process takes place partly in the conscious, partly in the unconscious regions of the self ; partly willed, because of the total desire to bring the self into harmony with God's purposes, but still more largely effected in the recesses of the soul beyond conscious reach. So it comes about that after a long period of conscious wrestling the transmutation is suddenly found to have been effected ; deep serenity has taken the place of stress, though when, and by what means, cannot be clearly understood. After which, "although on the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. especially *Browning and Modern Thought*, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Michael Müller's study, *St. Francis de Sales*, especially p. 219.

surface it may be rough weather, twenty fathoms down it is quite calm."

The soul is sexless, or, it may be, bi-sexual ; at all events, it cannot be uni-sexual, therefore when a relationship enters the regions of the soul, sex-barriers are inevitably broken down. The process of transmutation is as it were a gear-change from a physical to a spiritual awareness, which more comprehensive awareness does not *deny* the existence of the body. In the best forms of mysticism the aim of love is always, not the annihilation but the spiritualisation of the "natural" man. Similarly those forms of mysticism or sanctity which interpret detachment as essentially a hardening of the heart, which in teaching that all men should be loved equally, thus discouraging every kind of individual love or friendship, have not grasped the significance of the love understood so well by St. John, who *through the quality* of his deep love for Jesus loved every living thing, and all God's creation—the inevitable result, the test and fruit, of any love rooted in the divine, which sees in the individual human object of devotion the pattern and image of the Creator. And through such love all aspects of life, all aspects of love itself, human manifestations no less than immediate intimations of divinity, are sacramental, because seen with the eye of Love ; in the words of Blake, "Everything that lives is holy." The state *beyond* good and evil always sought by the mystics is inevitably attained. But the attainment depends wholly on the *quality* of the love.

Some thinkers suggest that in Christian love Eros is crucified and lives in a new manner through the operation of faith, but this is not too precise a symbolical expression of the process. The symbol of the



Transfiguration would be truer than that of the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

In *The Diary of a Country Priest*, Georges Bernanos remarks that "those who believe confession draws us into dangerous contact with women are very mistaken," meaning that in dealing with *souls* the dangerous personal element is inevitably transcended. In any case, the sacramental view of life reveres the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is precisely the lack of this view which lies at the *root* (there may be many other superficial reasons) of all human vice. Sexual vice is not so much a sin against moral principles (which indeed can dissolve so easily into abstract relative values that little but wisps of speculation remain), as against *love*, which, in fact, since God is Love, is a sin against God Himself, and hence the sin against the Holy Spirit. Only this conception of love has the power to cast out the fear roused by the dark demon which sex can too often become. What Berdyaev says of true mysticism applies equally to a proper understanding of the nature of love.

A true mysticism overcomes the fear which Satan inspires. When we experience this fear and feel overcome by evil it shows that we are still in bondage to created nature in all its sinfulness and alienation from God. To rise above this is to conquer the fear of Satan and the obsession of evil which isolates the created world from God. The way to this victory is primarily that of asceticism,<sup>1</sup> sacrifice and holiness. But this is not all, for there is also the way of creation, and illumination, the surging ecstasy of human nature.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> But Berdyaev is no friend to a *rigid inhuman* asceticism.

<sup>2</sup> *Freedom and the Spirit*, p. 263.



In creativeness, illumination and surging ecstasy are experienced because creativeness means co-operation with God. It is for this reason that those who understand the true nature of love and creativeness regard the hatred and destruction of war as the grossest of sins : a sin against both love and the divine-natural principle of creativeness. And if, as Shakespeare suggests,<sup>1</sup> murder is as near to lust as flame to smoke, the widespread indiscriminate murder of war can well be interpreted as an outrageous sexual orgy, and the fearful proportions of modern war seen as due to the general misunderstanding and consequent violation of the laws of love and physical creation. Certainly in an age where women take a corrupt pleasure in wearing masculine clothing, thereby perversely stressing their actual sex and arousing a brood of lustful thoughts and images, the seeds of racial and social decay and disaster are germinating rapidly and the resultant weeds must inevitably run riot and strangle the good grain. Many books and pamphlets are written on the causes of war, but a psychologist of Freud's type of understanding combining such unwholesome knowledge with the clear vision of a Christian philosopher like Berdyaev, is needed to analyse the disease adequately, and such thinkers are rare.

The natural result of a period of secularism and neglect of moral and spiritual values is seen in the following words from a popular newspaper :

In theory, all our private interests are secondary to the interests of the State. . . . The Government has power to make sweeping changes if it thinks necessary. We can be ordered here or

<sup>1</sup> *Pericles*, Act I, Scene 1.

there ; our private property can be confiscated, our labour can be directed. We are—and *properly*<sup>1</sup>—ciphers in a great machine.<sup>2</sup>

“Ciphers in a great machine.” This is the final negation and denial of the Christian view of human life, which lays especial emphasis on the value of the individual soul. The secular view, born of an ever-increasing worship of commercial and materialistic values, has come to regard the human being as of no more importance than a cog or “cipher” in the machine of modern civilisation, which is the logical effect of the Machine Age prophetic thinkers have rightly dreaded. Thence follows State-worship ; first the loathed “religion” of the totalitarians, and now the avowed faith, as the above words plainly declare, of the democracies, who, in fighting the “devil” by his own methods have no choice but to borrow his weapons. Only the saving faith of the great spiritual leaders the world over—which leaders are by no means necessarily members of any particular Church or recognised religious sect—realises that such warfare cannot but lead to further warfare, that, as Jesus himself said, Satan can never cast out Satan, that evil can be overcome only by good. A belief in the worth of the individual human soul, and a proper understanding of the nature of love, would inevitably mean reverence for the human body—“a transparency through which the spirit shines, a glass for the indwelling flame,”<sup>3</sup> thus precluding the possibility of war, for the injury or destruction of the body would be recognised as an unforgivable sin.

<sup>1</sup> The *italics* are mine.

<sup>2</sup> *Sunday Despatch*, February 16, 1941.

<sup>3</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 98.

Eros, the god of human love, is the bridge-builder, the messenger from God, the torch-bearer lighting the way to God, because it is through an understanding of the divinity of human love that man finds his way to God. Human love at its highest is a reflection on earth of divine love. And because this Holy Spirit is housed in the human body, the body itself is holy.

As the expression of the spiritual, the perfection of the physical is an integral part of man's complete living.<sup>1</sup>

In a long and detailed exposition of the Hindu faith, Professor Radhakrishnan proclaims the root-belief of all deeply spiritual religions, which aim never at the disparagement of the physical, but always at its sanctification, a principle very imperfectly, if at all, apprehended by the strict and merciless ascetics.

A repellent picture of a modern ascetic is painted by Georges Bernanos in *Star of Satan*. The source of such asceticism is poisoned, and, as a result, the flesh, which should be revered as the sweet vesture of the spirit, reviled, because deeply feared [hatred is always a form of fear] and condemned as in itself evil, pregnant with terrifying power. But the subtle truth about harsh asceticism and mortification has been urged by Toyohiko Kagawa in his book *Love, the Law of Life*, when he remarks that mortification may control and subdue the flesh, but is of no avail for controlling the mind. Here we touch the root of the problem, for in driving fleshly desires away from the body they can only too easily be driven into the mind, where vice may be indulged with impunity, and without any apparent evil results. In this connection it is import-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

ant to ponder deeply on the meaning of Jesus's words :

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery, But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.<sup>1</sup>

In the truly transfigured life, the life that without restless striving for sanctification has been touched by the spirit of Christ and by such divine touch is indeed made new, love, perfected in one moment of supreme vision, casts out all occasion for turmoil and fear. The marriage of Eros and Agapé, the only basis of true peace in human relationships, is consummated through the union of the soul with Christ, and thus Eros sees at last in Agapé the perfection which alone can transform lovers to its own image.

<sup>1</sup> Gospel according to St. Matthew v, 27, 28.

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June 1977



## CHAPTER IV

### REALITY

“Love is the confounder of all antitheses. It breaks the line between the here and the hereafter, between change and changeless, time and eternity. It is peace in conflict, contemplation in the midst of action, sight piercing through faith. For in love the divine meets the human.”—JOHN BURNABY, *Amer Dei*.

“’Twas of thatt silent meeting his high vision came  
rapturous as any vision ever to poet given ;  
since in thatt Sacrament he rebaptized his soul  
and lived thereafter in Love, by the merit of Faith  
toiling to endow the world. . . .”

ROBERT BRIDGES, *The Testament of Beauty*.

BECAUSE the mystery of love is so deeply and inevitably involved with the problem of suffering it is not surprising to find that throughout history the great lovers have been the martyrs, either martyrs for the love of God or martyrs for human love. It seems that always love is destined to tragedy in the world. So it is that the most famous love-story, the story of Heloise and Abelard, is at the same time the story of a martyrdom lasting more than half a lifetime. Both sought refuge from an intolerable situation in the religious life, but found no peace there ; indeed, peace could scarcely be found when the life is dedicated to God only as an escape from a human life grown unbearable. In this sense it is true that the Lord God is a jealous God, and those who misunderstand the terms of surrender can never find fulfilment or peace. But God is not “jealous” in the sense the ascetics believe ; He does not demand the *sacrifice* of human love on His altar—such an idea savours harshly of the ideas of pagan

sacrifice—what He does demand is the dedication and sanctification of that love, that through their love for each other the lovers shall learn more fully to love and serve Him. If, in passionate surrender to the claims of human love, God is forgotten, then disaster ensues. But if, conversely, love is recognised as a means whereby God may be yet more perfectly worshipped, if, from the outset, the love is acknowledged as God-given, and therefore given back to Him, dedicated, in gratitude and adoration, then there are no limits to the heights attainable, to the power which can be released. Thus it was the *nature* of the love of Heloise and Abelard that brought disaster upon them.<sup>1</sup> Theirs was an idolatrous love, forgetful of God, although they professed in their daily lives to serve Him alone. Eros *took the place of* the God-head, and such love is deadly sin. The tragedy was intensified because the intellectual element in their relationship, the “marriage of true minds,” could have helped to build the most perfect love known to man. Often the lovers were as cruelly torn by the hunger of the mind as by the desire of the flesh. Implicitly, too, they believed in the predestined quality of their love, in its inevitability. Always the concept of love is inwoven with the sense of eternity, a passion preceding, and existing beyond, the limits of life on earth :

We shall never be divided. We have existed always, united in the end as we were in the beginning, and it cannot be said that we shall be parted, come what may. It is even so as thou

<sup>1</sup> It seems that Heloise was dimly aware of this, for she wrote to Abelard : “ Thy mistake was to desire me wholly, for in this world God’s gifts are partial. Clasp nothing, not even love, too tightly, lest love die in thy embrace.” George Moore, *Heloise and Abelard*, p. 468.

speakest it, that I feel our love, she said, as a thing that always was and ever shall be. That our love, he answered, was before the beginning of time is my belief, and I believe too that it shall not end with time.<sup>1</sup>

Heloise also says : " It has always seemed to me that our love came to us from the stars," a symbolic statement of the sense of a birthless and deathless passion. And what is this sense, in the last resort, but an intuition of the soul's separation from and union with God ? How else explain the consciousness of frustration in fulfilment ? The human soul strives beyond its earthly capacity, seeks at last, driven by a force stronger than the will, to attain to the unattainable through physical union, where, surely, consummation and peace will be found. But the physical union, rather than finally satisfying, creates a deeper hunger ; the goal is still far off.

And because of the idolatrous nature of their love, the immortal story of Heloise and Abelard verges on the blasphemous, for often it led them, not to the heights of sublimity, but to the depths of deception and infamy, even to sacrilege. According to George Moore's version of the story, the relationship began with deception, and was nourished by deception throughout. Abelard, the great philosopher and searcher after truth, did not hesitate to lie to Heloise's uncle, neither did he and Heloise hesitate to lie to their companions in the religious houses where they took refuge, and in using religion as a cloak, as well as an escape from their personal problems, they debased both love and religion, thus sinning against the Holy Spirit. Nowhere is there any suggestion of Eros as

<sup>1</sup> George Moore, *Heloise and Abelard*, p. 177.

the messenger of God ; rather he seems to be God's enemy. Nowhere is there any suggestion that through their love for each other the lovers touched divinity, and so knew an embracing love for humanity and all life. But is this perhaps a new conception of love, so often hinted at in the works of Berdyaev, and perhaps glimpsed by Patmore in *The Unknown Eros* :

What rumoured heavens are these  
Which not a poet sings,  
O Unknown Eros ? What this breeze  
Of sudden wings  
Speeding at far returns from interstellar space  
To fan my very face,  
And gone as fleet,  
Through delicat'st ether feathering soft their solitary  
beat,  
With ne'er a light plume dropp'd, nor any trace  
To speak of whence they came, or whither they depart ?  
And whence this palpitating heart,  
This blind and unrelated joy ? . . .

. . . . .

And whence  
This rapture of the sense  
Which, by thy whisper bid,  
Reveres with obscure rite and sacramental sign  
A bond I know not of nor dimly can divine ? . . .

. . . . .

What God unhonour'd hitherto in songs,  
Or which, that now  
Forgettest that disguise  
That gods must wear who visit mortal eyes,  
Art Thou ?  
Thou art not Amor . . .



What god? Not blind, havoc-working Eros, but the unknown messenger, in this rôle unacknowledged as yet, the intermediary between God and man, the Holy Spirit? But, as in the mystery of the Trinity, not two gods, but one god. The root-principle of mysticism, which finally admits only unity, would insist that both aspects of the nature of Eros, the divine and the human, spiritual and physical, are alike necessary and to be accepted. Hence perhaps also the concept of a God of good *and evil*.

(I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me . . .

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.<sup>1</sup>

To understand and release the *divine* element in Eros is to unlock the Eden-gates so firmly closed by ignorance and its twin-jailer fear. The key to unlock the gates is offered to every soul born into the world, but commonly it is lost, or neglected until it rusts and will not turn in the lock. The sanctification of human love is the first step to the Kingdom of Heaven which Jesus came to establish, a kingdom not of this world (though it can be established in this world), because the world fights continually to thrust out the power proceeding from the Father and the Son. The world created by man, and its relentless evil, is continually referred to by Jesus, especially in St. John's Gospel; St. John, the mystic, would be the disciple whose ears were peculiarly attuned to these words; he, who had seen the vision of the Kingdom, would be preternaturally

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xlv, 5, 7.

sensitive to all which threatened to overthrow it. The kingdom has no "place" in the external world—at present. It can live only in the hearts of men. But thence, through enlightened understanding, it *can* be established, though not until "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."<sup>1</sup> These mysteries are clear to some, dark and enigmatical to others.

Here I must quote at some length from Havelock Ellis's autobiography, *My Life*. He, the great student of sexual problems, had come deeply to understand the secrets and the significances hidden in human love :

{ Passion transcends sex. I shall never belittle the great roots of sex in life. . . . But I have discovered that the sexual impulse of physical attraction may pass away and give place to a passion that is stronger than it. { That is a discovery with a significance for life and the institution of marriage which has not yet been measured. And I smile when I see the ephemeral creatures of a day sneering at love. We who are not the creatures of a day, who live greatly, and do the work of the world, we are moved by love so that, rather than belittling love, we would even see a sense in the final extravagance of Dante, and end, as he ends, on the omnipotence of love, "Tamor che move il sole e l'altre stelle." }<sup>2</sup>

Here he declares plainly that those "who live greatly, who do the work of the world" are pioneers with a richer understanding of mysteries which must one day be universally clear. Meanwhile, "he that hath an

<sup>1</sup> The Revelation of St. John the Divine xi, 15.

<sup>2</sup> *My Life*, p. 519.

ear to hear, let him hear.”<sup>1</sup> Many theologians and philosophers create difficulties and problems where none exist for those of purged vision. Jesus stressed the necessity to receive the Kingdom of God “as a little child.” There is, for example, the kind of problem created in an article by Mr. Channing-Pearce in *The Hibbert Journal*:<sup>2</sup>

Christianity . . . means, in some quite real sense, the death of “eros,” the natural love of desire, and it offers for the life and love so sacrificed “another life” beyond death, and another love, the love of the Christian “agapé,” arising from the death of desire. What psychology calls repression, Christianity calls renunciation.

But Christian psychology does not call Agapé repression, it calls it sublimation, or transmutation. Further, the deepest enlightenment, often not attained by religious leaders or philosophers, understands that, at bottom, renunciation, or even sublimation, do not exist. But this is a most subtle and difficult concept to grasp; perhaps it can only be understood through living, through a ceaseless concentration on reality.

Agapé is not, as Mr. Channing-Pearce continually suggests a “ghostly, faint, glimmering corpse-light flickering from the tomb” of erotic love, nor is it, to a final understanding, divorced from it. Rather is it an extension, or expansion, of erotic love. The two may, and should, co-exist.

In a magnificent chapter, “Eros,” in *The Christian Renaissance*, Professor Wilson Knight unifies the apparently dual nature of human and divine love,

<sup>1</sup> Ouspensky in *A New Model of the Universe* notes that these words are repeated seventeen times in the New Testament.

<sup>2</sup> *The Ethics of a Kingdom not of this World*, October, 1935.

using the passionate reality of Christianity to this end :

The New Testament does not repudiate sex as evil : rather, like all poets, it gives human union the highest imaginative honours. But we are urged primarily to rich life, life rich as a lover's, unlimited, passionately strong and deathlessly loving. . . . The love-experience is . . . to be channelled, developed, to be allowed to irrigate the whole parched deserts of our lives from birth to death. . . . We are never urged to be hostile to sex : rather, to be supersexual. To love universally, warmly, richly, yet with control ; to know the awakened life that comes to the lover, possess it, powerful, invariable and invincible (p. 303).

*Rich life.* Life, not death. Expression, not repression. This warm, rich, passionate life-consciousness is not born of repression, which is psychologically unsound and fraught with danger, not even necessarily from "renunciation," although from such an experience it can be. In repression the impulse is denied, mercilessly aborted, and from such abortion only a dangerous sepsis can and does result. Whereas in the right type of "renunciation," the unwise, or for some reason forbidden, impulse is fully accepted *in the mind* : all the implications faced in their totality and frankly considered, then transmuted by the mysterious labours of the spirit into intense creative power. This process is perhaps one of the most fruitful sources of achievement, and the resolution of a problem too long considered insoluble. But it must never be thought that this way *alone* is the way of redemption, victory and



achievement. The way designed by the Creator is the way of perfect human love in all its tenderness, beauty and strength. The enlightened Christian accepts the beauty and joy in love as aspects, reflections of God's own glory, and knows that through this experience the whole self finds fulfilment, peace and power. Therefore so potent a force for good must never be repudiated or denied in the mind, even when outward expression is inadmissible. It must be accepted and used by the whole self in the service of the greater whole, Life, of which love and sex, though such vitally important factors, are only a part. In a world impaired by the sins of a humanity which has wandered far from any understanding of the deep and irrevocable laws, consummate human love is so rare that few believe in its existence or possibility, but only through a return to faith in such a love will the innumerable torturing personal problems of mankind be resolved.

Fulfilment of the sex-impulse, in the natural sense, is a means to an end, and that end, normally, the creation of life, which is good, but too often the fulfilment is regarded as an end in itself, which is disastrous. There is in human love a quality far removing it from the simple sex-urge of the animals. To quote Browning :

. . . had fate  
 Proposed bliss here should sublimate  
 My being . . .  
 Still one must lead some life beyond.<sup>1</sup>

It is from this sense of frustration in fulfilment, or from the utter defeat of love's natural hopes, from loss

<sup>1</sup> *The Last Ride Together.*

and sorrow, that the greater love may be born. Thus, both fulfilment and frustration can prove creative of the highest good. The finest men and women are those who have resolved, so far as is humanly possible, the Eros-Agapé "problem." In this resolution pain is inevitable, but pain is integral to growth. Some may find fulfilment, in the narrower personal sense, others may not, but the final solution, as they well know, lies not there, but in a comprehensive understanding of the words "he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." The discovery of this life, a life independent of all external conditions, means an infinitely richer existence than any dreamed of by those who choose the path of self-gratification. Again I quote from *The Christian Renaissance* :

Jesus asserts that in a world which often negates life-instincts yet life may flower everywhere in all richness if we but touch the life-centre. . . .

{ "Man does not live by bread alone ; nor marriage, nor even love. Only by life ." (p. 307). }

( And this fullest life cannot be born of personal possessive love, nor from reckless, thoughtless abandonment and self-indulgence, only from an understanding of the true nature and purpose of erotic love, itself a gift from God. )

As Toyohiko Kagawa, the great Japanese Christian and social reformer, points out, a love surpassing sexual desire must come into being, a passionate, psychic love, which transcends, while including, love in its narrower significance, and it is only through the development of such a love that urgent social problems, sexual and otherwise, can be solved. Legislation, especially when intimate and urgent issues are at

stake, cannot finally prove more than a surface treatment, leaving the depths, the roots of the difficulties, untouched. Regeneration, true reform, can come only through a transformation of the attitude to love itself. Writing of the problem of prostitution, Kagawa says :

If the Japanese people could awaken to psychic love, they would quickly abolish the system of licensed prostitution.<sup>1</sup> This system will not be destroyed merely by campaigns. . . . *More basic than such superficial movements is the fundamental necessity of refining men's love,*<sup>2</sup> of awakening them to advance from physical to psychic love.<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere in the book he stresses the impossibility of reforming sexual morality except by the power of religion, a point on which many of the best writers on sexual problems agree.<sup>4</sup>

The divine element in human love is evidenced by the close affinity between love at its highest and mysticism. It can truly be affirmed that the highest experiences of love are in nature and quality nearly identical with mystical experience of a devotional nature. But this is not to be confused with what is known as "nuptial mysticism," which seeks to interpret experience of the Divine in terms of human eroticism.<sup>5</sup> Though, conversely, the mystical element in human

<sup>1</sup> The principle applies equally, of course, to a country where prostitution is not legalised. The proper approach to and understanding of love is the *only* solution to this vital problem.

<sup>2</sup> The *italics* are mine.

<sup>3</sup> *Love, the Law of Life*, pp. 71, 72.

<sup>4</sup> He mentions Francis Galton, *Study of Human Capacities*, Bloch, *Modern Sexual Life*, Ellen Key, Havelock Ellis and others.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Chapter I, p. 17.

love is known in terms close akin to Divine union—the sense of timelessness, eternity, immortality,<sup>1</sup> there is a necessary difference between the two types of love, and it is important to keep them distinct. Sanctification of human love, not secularisation of divine love, is the essential. The mind of health and wholeness, which is the mind of true holiness, for without holiness there can be no wholeness, instinctively revolts, however gently, from the idea of Christ as “lover,” from the meaning of the lines in Crashaw’s poem, *The Prayer* :

. . . she shall discover  
 What joy, what bliss,  
 How many heavens at once it is  
 To have her God become her Lover.

This is where so many mystics and mystical poets subtly offend. While the human lover, raised to heights of spirituality and mysticism through his love, inevitably uses physical imagery to express the experience, such imagery used in the cause of divine mysticism usually tends to what if carried a step further would savour of blasphemy. Not because there is, or could be, anything blasphemous in the nature of human love itself, but because of the transcendent nature of divine love, before which human words, human imagery, inevitably fails, and tends to a lessening of the true quality of the experience. How could it be otherwise? Language is totally inadequate to express the joys and conflicts and wonders of human love; how then could tongue or pen hope to speak or

<sup>1</sup> They that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it. Death cannot kill what never dies. Nor can spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same divine principle the root and record of their friendship.—William Penn.



write of a relationship infinitely more ineffable? The mystical poets approach nearest to the goal of true expression when they avoid human love-imagery altogether. In one of the greatest of mystical poems, *The Hound of Heaven*, there is no such imagery, and every line sparkles and tingles with richness and power :

Across the margent of the world I fled  
 And troubled the gold gateway of the stars,  
 Smiting for shelter on their clangéd bars ;  
 Fretted the dulcet jars  
 And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon. . . .

To all swift things for swiftness did I sue,  
 Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.  
 But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,  
 The long savannahs of the blue,  
 Or whether, thunder-riven,  
 They clangéd his chariot 'thwart a heaven,  
 Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn of their  
 feet :  
 Fear wist not to evade as love wist to pursue.

And always the strong theme :

But with unhurrying chase,  
 And unperturbéd pace,  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy. . . .

He speaks of "this tremendous Lover," but clearly here, and throughout, the word lover and love is free of erotic implications; this is made clear through the *spirit* and *quality* of the whole poem; the powerful masculine wrestling of the soul—as with Hopkins—the virile imagery, as in the lines :

My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me  
And smitten me to my knee ;

. . . . .

In the rash lustihead of my young powers,  
I shook the pillaring hours  
And pulled my life upon me ;

(a wonderful Samson-image), and in the ringing  
triumphant note :

Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
From the hid battlements of Eternity ;

and Christ is seen

. . . enwound

With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned—  
the picture of a stern, gentle, suffering Christ infinitely  
removed from man, yet infinitely near, not a lover,  
but a divine friend, who in his transcendent friendship,  
in perfect compassion, perfect hope, perfect faith,  
endures every suffering, every disappointment, for the  
sake of the beloved. The image of the friend is surely  
truer of him than the image of lover, in the human  
sense of the word, for in friendship serenity and per-  
fection may be found more readily than in love, where  
unrest and desire often play too powerful a part.  
And it is the divine Friend who says :

Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save Me, save only Me ?  
All that I took from thee I did but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might's't seek it in My arms.  
All which thy child's mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home :  
Rise, clasp My hand, and come !

Wisely he has withheld, or taken away, all that hinders the soul from entering its true home. The Friendship of God is a happier analogy than the continual stress of the mystics on God as Lover. Clearly there is no image which can *adequately* express the relation between man and the Creator.

It is noteworthy that in the Bible itself, with of course the outstanding exception of the ecclesiastical interpretation of *The Song of Songs*, erotic imagery is rarely used to express the soul's relation with God. In the Psalms the experience vividly described in *The Hound of Heaven* is spoken of :

Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit : or whither shall I go then from Thy presence ? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there : if I go down to hell thou art there also.

If I take the wings of the morning : and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea :

Even there also shall thy hand lead me : and thy right hand shall hold me. . . .

. . . . .

My bones are not hid from thee : though I be made secretly, and fashioned beneath in the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect : and in thy book were all my members written.<sup>1</sup>

In the words of St. Augustine : " Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee."

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxxxix

## II

“ We can never learn to reverence life until we know how to understand sex.”—HAVELOCK ELLIS.

The churches, in these tragic days, proclaim the need for a rebirth of Christianity if civilisation is to be saved. They write and speak much of the secular powers which have overshadowed the world and brought the nations to the very verge of the abyss of final and irretrievable disaster. They contrast the powers of the dictators, of force and false ideologies, with the power of Love :

Jesus Christ appeals to love only—not pride or hate. . . . Our hearts must be largely changed before they can be altogether devoted to Christ. But He Himself alone can change them and will do so if we open them to His love.<sup>1</sup>

But what exactly do such words as these—and millions like them are being expended in the cause of Christianity—mean to the average man and woman, for whom religion is something set apart from their everyday lives, something which appeals to certain types of people and impels them to attend church on Sundays, which further impels others not only to attend church but to engage in parish work, sit on committees, lecture on philanthropic schemes, teach in Sunday schools, and so on. What does the average man or woman understand of this Love, which, on the face of it, appears to be synonymous with the meekness mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount, the kind of attitude which encourages peace at any price, and

<sup>1</sup> William Temple, Archbishop of York, *Towards a Christian Britain*, Leaflet No. 3.



allows your neighbour to wrong you as much as he likes without any protest from you? How can it, by the very nature of things, bring peace to the nations, and the power of just and adequate reconstruction to a world already half in material and more than half in spiritual ruins? Surely, in preaching the gospel of serenity and gentleness, it lacks any such power. So it seems that still, as always, the churches speak a language foreign to the average man and woman. They have not learned the art of speaking direct to the heart. When the soul has already been touched by the spirit of Christ, every word, every phrase, concerned with that miraculous life and the Power inspiring it, is vibrant with meaning: the words have caught fire and blaze and quiver with life; the *soul* responds. But when the door of the soul is still closed? It cannot be forced open; it must be opened from within—a truth beautifully expressed in Holman Hunt's picture, *The Light of the World*. And the key is hidden in the heart. There, and there only, lies the clue to the secret. The Church has failed to appeal to the heart, and without that passionately human appeal the deeper regions of the personality can never be reached. When Christian leaders speak of the heart, they mean something rather different from the connotation given earlier in this book: the seat of the emotions; it seems that they mean rather the *core* of the personality. But as the physical heart is the centre of the body, whence all other power flows, and without which throbbing life the individual is a mass of inert matter, so in the personality, without the symbolic "heart," the seat of the emotions, there can be no warm, pulsing, creative life.

And here we confront Havelock Ellis's wise words:

/ We can never learn to reverence life until we know how to understand sex! (it might profitably be inverted also : " We can never learn to understand life until we know how to reverence sex "). It is precisely because the Church as a whole has failed to understand sex *in its totality*, has isolated sex from love (not love from sex), that by far the greater majority not only find no appeal in the Christian teaching, but positively fear and shun it, believing it to be full of prohibitions and hard rules against which the innate warmth and instinctive needs of the personality has no choice but to rebel. Those versions of the New Testament which translate the word " love " in 1 Corinthians xiii as " charity " gravely wrong the concept of love. It is unfortunate that the poverty of the English language (and many modern European languages), offers one word only for the love of the mind, of the soul, of the body, for maternal passion, for child-like devotion, for the mutual joy and strength of friendship, for the saint's hunger, the poet's ecstasy and torment, the reformer's agony of compassion for a stricken world. One word only : / love. And for most people this word means only the relation of the sexes. For others, love in the Christian sense is a vague and confusing concept lacking in power. They forget that through the *power* of Jesus' love he not only bore the immediate agony of the Crucifixion, but the incessant crucifixion of the sins and sufferings of the world He came to redeem, and was thus called to bear ; forget, too, that it was the storm of His spiritual indignation (not the scourge in His hand, which could have had no such power), that drove the profaners from the Temple. He was not *only* " meek and lowly of heart."

Because of the depth and range of its perception, the Christian teaching abounds in contradictions. Even the command "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" presents an apparent difficulty, which can only be resolved by clearer insight, and a knowledge of Christian psychology. In the first place, who can be said *properly* to love himself? Normally, love of self connotes egotism, indulgence, conceit; a preoccupation with and love of the self is only too appealing and attractive, for where in the Universe can a worthier and more delightful object of attention be found? And how could such a love be extended to the neighbour? If it were possible, it would harm and hinder, not improve, an already difficult situation. But Christianity says that the individual must love himself *as a child of God* (for that reason, self-hatred is a sin), and love equally as children of God his neighbours. That is the answer. Simple, yet in application infinitely complex.

Unless the Church is prepared radically to alter its attitude to emotional problems, to sweep away the implication, no matter how gentle, that love, and sexual difficulties, are on a lower plane than the spiritual life, and therefore to be considered in isolation, Christianity will remain for ever the unappealing, remote religion it too often appears. Consider only briefly the attitude of the two leading churches, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant, to marriage and divorce. In the Catholic Church, certainly, marriage is treated with due (perhaps even undue!) reverence; there is preparation for marriage, and the ceremony is a sacrament, while divorce is unconditionally condemned, and therefore not considered as a problem. In the Protestant Church, marriage is technically

regarded as sacramental also, and it is therefore deplorable that so little preparation for the receiving of the sacrament is undertaken by the Church. Usually when the engaged couple go to make arrangements for the wedding there is no suggestion from the priest of the serious nature of the life they are about to begin, and three weeks or so later the bride and bridegroom enter the church without even having read the Marriage Service. The priest, in common with the majority of parents and teachers, shrinks from intimate talk. No doubt Providence will somehow supply all the necessary information, both spiritual and physical. In a similar manner, mothers commonly commend their young daughters, and fathers their sons, to the protection of heaven for the preservation of their chastity, and general sexual health and well-being. The wedding itself, an enjoyable social event centering round the bride's gown, the wedding presents and the reception, further distracts the thoughts of the pair from the true nature of the undertaking. If marriage were made as difficult as divorce, divorce would be far less frequent. But, as usual, the problem is approached from the wrong angle. There is no "problem of divorce," only the problem of marriage—and neither would be a problem were love understood. But meanwhile, it is to marriage that primary attention should be given, not to divorce.

It is valuable to compare the space given in the Church of England Book of Common Prayer to the Form of Solemnisation of Matrimony—three pages—with the 598 pages devoted to the subject of divorce in the lawyer's monumental textbook, *Rayden on Divorce*. The Prayer Book thus briefly passes over a subject to which Rayden devotes a mountain of thought,



learning and space, dissipating finally in his 598 pages what the Church and kindly superficial friends conspire to suggest is an undertaking which, though the Prayer Book certainly does warn that it is "not to be enterprised nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly," is one of unparalleled attractiveness and desirability, with no really grave drawbacks or difficulties. Many things help in consolidating this view : sentimentality in all its forms, tales and plays which stress romance to the total extinction of realism, where all the charm and none of the problems appear ; dance music and dance songs, with their lilting luring erotic rhythms and rosy-romantic words, song-ballads of flowers and stars and summer moonlight, even, alas, some of the plays and tales of so delightful a writer as Barrie, where love is pictured as no more grave or desperate an affair than kisses and tender words, and gentle—never passionate—embraces, and the sweet child-like heroines confess whisperingly to friendly trees that a darling baby has mysteriously appeared in their lives, and the audience murmurs "How charming." Lack of realism is responsible for too many disasters, not least among them war,<sup>1</sup> to be passed over lightly. Censorship should be extended to everything which presents an unbalanced, and therefore

<sup>1</sup> It is a common form of "escapism"—which is the converse of realism—to confuse the horrors of scientific modern warfare with the wars of the past, where there may have been a certain romantic, adventurous thrill. Moreover, modern warfare is more evil in so far as it tends to remove the sense of individual moral responsibility ; the mechanical action of releasing a bomb from an aeroplane is, for this reason, a more serious crime than a bayonet-thrust, where the individual is precisely aware of what he is doing. Dr. Nicolai in his book, *The Biology of War*, truly says : "Everything beautiful and characteristic in the war of ancient days has vanished. Gone is the gay camp life, gone are the motley uniforms, gone is the single combat, gone, in a word, are the show features. The old lively joyous war is dead."

false, picture of life. Under such censorship, the number of books, plays, films, and imaginative works generally, would be reduced to a healthy minimum, because, as every sincere artist knows, nothing is more difficult to achieve than a perfectly balanced representation of so tangled and various a subject as Life, and the exigencies of different temperaments in any case necessarily produce works in which certain aspects tend to predominate, while others fade into the background. But a proper understanding of the meaning of realism, a too common and greatly abused word in recent years, is vital to a true morality, as every philosopher knows, not confined to sex, but extended to every department of life.

The genuine realist is the man of powerful but controlled imagination; he alone has the capacity and the courage to face life as it is, in all its aspects and manifestations. The majority, the masses,<sup>1</sup> live in the proverbial fool's paradise, in a world of pure fiction, where the unpleasant is conveniently shelved, and never, throughout life, fully confronted and wrestled with. For them, the man of imagination and courage is a danger,<sup>2</sup> because he continually urges them to contemplate those very facts from which they spend their lives running with closed eyes. The realist has no pretty phrases for ugly things (neither does he retreat in alarm from "Beauty," as so many modern artists do), he portrays life, so far as he is able, exactly as it is, and for this reason, because he will not tolerate any form of remediable evil, society has no choice but to do all in its power to silence and

<sup>1</sup> Professor Denis Saurat in his small book, *Regeneration*, has recently pointed out that the proportion of "leader" or original types of mind born is one in a thousand.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ouspensky, *A New Model of the Universe*, p. 53 et seq.

if possible remove him from the scene of possible dangerous action. Left alone, he is certain to disturb them in some uncomfortable way. Hence the persecution of the saints, the deaths of the martyrs, the mountains of opposition set in the way of all reformers. The persecution and the opposition take a variety of forms, ranging from slanderous attack to imprisonment and/or death, but the moral attack is possibly the most popular, the argument being that those who see so much evil everywhere cannot but be evil themselves ; normal, " good " people are content to leave others alone to live their lives as they wish, and certainly there are a number of subjects which are best left alone, and not even mentioned, and a whole vocabulary of words which should never be used or even permitted to invade the mind, especially in certain connections. It is pleasanter, safer, for example, to refer to an immortal passion as a love-affair, this robs it at once of its dangerous and life-transforming quality ; similarly, it is pleasanter not to use the word adultery, which helps in the illusion that the seventh commandment is never really broken. Again, war must never be called murder, and in private and State morality quite a different scale of values prevails. Individuals who commit murder are sentenced to death, but nations are commended for this activity, and men are trained to do it in the most efficient and even the most diabolical way. In a civilised world, scientists are allowed to vie with each other in producing the most virulent forms of poison gases, instead of being sentenced to some suitable form of penance, as a private individual would be if discovered experimenting with poisons with intent to kill. An insidious veil is drawn over the real facts

of war—and no wonder. If the inhabitants of the proverbial fool's paradise were suddenly endowed with the capacity to see it as it is their reaction would be as severe as that of a layman in an operating-theatre witnessing for the first time, and without any previous mental preparation, a major operation of the worst type. Some years after the war of 1914-1918 many writers were impelled to express the horrors as they themselves had experienced them, hoping—vainly, as it transpired—through their presentation of this fiendish picture to stir the public imagination and so ensure no repetition of the evil. In Germany Remarque wrote *All Quiet on the Western Front*, in France Barbusse produced *Under Fire*, in England Mottram in *The Spanish Farm Trilogy* painted perhaps the most masterly picture of the three. These books were outstanding among a multitude of similar ones. But the authors were reckoning without the public imagination ; it cannot be stirred for the good reason that it does not exist. What does exist in the mass-mind is blind emotion, and that is stirred only by anything directly threatening itself. The events related in war-books excited and horribly thrilled precisely as crook films and plays, thrillers and gruesome ghost stories do (war itself, unfortunately, has a similar effect, hence the awe-stricken yet perversely eager anticipation of horrors and dangers). In some mysterious way the mass-mind always fails to relate literature or drama to actual life, and by this means conveniently transmutes whatever it reads or sees into something which cannot really happen, and certainly never to itself. Hence the widespread illusion, even among the enlightened, that drama is a mere “show,” an imaginative but untrue picture of life, instead of



what it actually is : the quintessence of life, stripped of all fictions :

the naked world of burning thought and quick-changing emotion, that psychic world half-known to ourselves and carefully obscured from our neighbour . . . the poignant world of primal feeling, violent subterranean life, and wayward passionate thought, controlled, denied, hidden often, then up-gushing to surprise ourselves ; the inner world we experience, the world we live and fear, but not the world we normally see ; nor the world we think we understand.<sup>1</sup>

Others decline to think at all on any but pleasant or comfortable lines, and so refuse to read disturbing books or see distressing plays, the argument being that life itself provides quite enough sadness, without reading books about it, or seeing it on the stage. A similar *type* of argument is advanced by those who, lacking any understanding of art or literature, protest that they prefer to study life through the newspapers.

Freudian psychology has produced the idea that in probing at last the secrets of sex, realism is confronted fully for the first time. This is pure delusion ; again, for the reason that so one-sided a view cannot be true. Understanding of sex is clearly of vital importance, as Havelock Ellis says, but the theories and discoveries of Freud err in precisely the same way as the Church has often erred : in isolating sex from love. Love is never mentioned, indeed has no place, in the Freudian philosophy. The poets of mystical love are infinitely nearer the truth. Most important of all are

<sup>1</sup> G. Wilson Knight, *Shakespeare and Tolstoy*, pp. 15, 16. English Association Pamphlet, No. 88.

the "poets of heaven and earth"—Shakespeare, Browning, Blake.<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare came at a vital moment in the development of human thought. Chaucer, Dante, Petrarch had already sounded a new note, had pointed the way to what was then a totally new conception of love, a certain idealisation,<sup>2</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> It may seem strange to class Shakespeare and Blake together, Blake being palpably the pure visionary or "other-worldly" poet, but perhaps the type of Blake's visionary experience is incompletely understood. He was so much at home in his inner world, which to him was the real—and it remains to be proved that it is not—that there was no cleavage between the Real and the Actual. Therefore he spoke as if his vision actually existed in the external world. The abyss between the real and the actual is, for most poets and philosophers, hard to bridge. There seems no way across, and everyday life, rather than providing material for building any bridge, appears fiendishly to destroy the materials as fast as the poet manufactures them. But a few rare poets have discovered that the abyss is unreal: there is no cleavage between the real and the actual, because the foundations of life are not material (actual) but spiritual (real) and the need for *effort* to maintain life in the inner world is illusory, because the inner is the real; it is the other life, the actual, that is illusory: a shadow cast by the inner. This Plato plainly declared. Shakespeare was as aware of it as Blake, but he expressed his intuitions in a manner more accessible to the average man, and in this way attained one of the two goals of the true mystic: the sanctification, through a vision of piercing clarity, of all life. To this purged vision, "everything that lives is holy," which brings us back to Blake.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to remember that I do not use the word "ideal" or "idealisation" to connote something unreal, or incapable of realisation on earth. A true ideal is not a dream of some event or state which can never materialise, but a vivid conception of something *to be attained*, not in a dream-world of the imagination, but here on earth, through an enlightened understanding of the laws governing life. Nothing is more harmful to true progress than the theory that perfection *on earth* is impossible, and can only exist in some state beyond death, in what may be called "heaven." The true mystical doctrine insists on perfection here and now; at bottom the same idea as the spiritualisation or sanctification of the physical. Life here on earth must be infused with spiritual fire, as the body is irradiated by the soul. But, as Keyserling points out, "It is only by comporting himself as an artist that man can succeed in incarnating in worldly life the spiritual meaning that he feels he represents in his innermost depths. It is just because man

idea that in the love of man and woman some vital secret of life lay concealed—not in the physical aspect, which during the Dark Ages had remained predominant, but in some mysterious fusion of physical and spiritual, a secret known, certainly, to the ancient peoples, but for centuries lost. So Shakespeare stood on the threshold of an era about to see clearly the divine significance of human love, and had no choice but to work, however unconsciously, for the advancement of this understanding. As Mr. Mégroz in his study of Francis Thompson remarks :

Shakespeare . . . seems strangely close to the Christian poetry of mystical love in his most passionate verse (p. 262),

and it is undoubtedly more profoundly true than we recognise that :

Had the influence of love-poetry in Europe been still more extensive and penetrating than it actually was, the unwholesome elements in ecclesiastical Christianity would never have produced those terrible unconscious revolts against the religion of love which led to massacre and persecution in the cause of salvation of souls (p. 259).

The revolts were, of course, "unconscious," which again suggests the vital and far-reaching importance of a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of love, and a fearless while reverent approach to its mysteries.

is free only in the sense in which the artist is free that all perfection of life depends on the man himself ; hence the glorious dignity of his condition." For this reason alone it is necessary to appreciate life itself as the greatest of arts.

## III

Mr. Hesketh Pearson, at the end of his study of William Hazlitt,<sup>1</sup> remarks :

Though his death was hastened by medical mis-treatment, the seeds of dissolution had been sown seven years before, and on his death-bed he may have remembered the words of a poet who had written to some other Sarah Walker :

Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath  
When his pulses failing, passion speechless lies,  
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,  
And innocence is closing up his eyes,  
Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over,  
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

The "seeds of dissolution" he refers to were sown when Hazlitt became at last fully and finally aware of the betrayal of the girl he worshipped. It may truly be said that his life ended then, that the subsequent years were only a death-in-life, when the fatal seeds germinated, took root, and at last strangled his physical being. The emotional bases of disease have not yet been fully recognised, but even a brief study of the inner lives of many famous men will prove this doctrine to be not a theory awaiting confirmation, but an irrefutable fact. The more enlightened and progressive members of the medical profession, doctors both of the body *and* of the mind, are beginning to realise that the problem of resistance to disease, and hence the problem of disease, is linked up to an overwhelming extent with attitudes of mind which conduce either

<sup>1</sup> *The Fool of Love*, p. 276.



to health or to ill-health. There is undoubtedly a fundamental cause underlying all disease, which has hitherto been overlooked. It is astonishing that comparatively few doctors even to-day seem to consider it part of their task to enquire into the mental and or emotional condition of the patient. And yet . . . the roots of these troubles lie so deep, the processes involved are so labyrinthine and enigmatical that specialists of a unique type are needed to investigate them. No wonder the average practitioner quails.

With Hazlitt, the tragedy lay partly in his temperament where indeed the root of all tragedy lies—and partly in the nature of his love. Clearly, the two are interdependent. For him

. . . love was an ideal passion to which there was no limit but that of possibility ; for human capacities and wishes, love was the infinite. " We give to it," he wrote once, " our all of hope, of fear, of present enjoyment, and stake our last chance of happiness wilfully and desperately upon it." <sup>1</sup>

while to Sarah Walker

Love was just a pleasant feeling, varied by an occasional thrill, and she was no more capable of experiencing the fever of passion than of understanding it in anyone else.<sup>2</sup>

Hazlitt, in common, unfortunately, with many other great men, lavished all his devotion, his passionate adoration, on a girl utterly unworthy, a coquette who neither wished to return his passion, nor would have

<sup>1</sup> *The Fool of Love*, p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

been capable had she wished.<sup>1</sup> And Hazlitt was no Dante or Petrarch ; his tragic love produced no Divine Comedy, no immortal sonnets, only a strange book, *Liber Amoris*, a painfully personal document taken direct from letters, notebooks and recalled fragments of conversations, which material is never of itself of the nature of art : the necessary transmutation has not taken place, the subtle depersonalising, universalising process which converts personal experience into work of enduring worth. The greatest creative artists have always understood the relative worthlessness of experience *in itself*, have known that a plain narration, no matter how poignant in content and detail, has little power to stir the listener compared with the almost limitless power of the same experience washed and purged and sifted in the mysterious laboratory of the artist's mind, and recreated in an art-form. Here we touch the core of the creative mystery, touch it, but still fail to understand it. The "matter of fact history of the circumstances" referred to in Shelley's "Advertisement" to *Epipsychidion* would have held little interest for anyone. A newspaper report of Shelley's meeting

<sup>1</sup> Such types are "emotionally impotent." The "emotionally potent" *dare not* play with the passion of love. It has been truly said that the flirt is always cold. Much attention is given to the calamity of physical impotence in marriage, but none at all to the pressing and painful problem of emotional impotence. But this inadequacy of approach to a vital human problem is quite consistent with the general attitude to marriage and divorce, which always stresses the physical, never the "spiritual," mental or emotional difficulties. In fact, those countries which consider temperamental incompatibility sufficient grounds for divorce are regarded with a measure of contempt. The reason for this is partly the tradition which demands contempt for all forms of "emotionalism." One might hope to look to the Church for help in this direction, but the Church also takes cognisance only of physical sins and infidelities.

with Emilia Viviani and the subsequent external developments would leave no more than a feeble and fleeting impression on the mind, but the lovely, unearthly poem born of the experience will be remembered so long as literature endures. The same applies to Dante, Beatrice and the *Vita Nuova* and *Divine Comedy*. This is why so often a play written around an immortal love-story fails. The dramatic representation, unless the creation of a dramatist himself as great as the main character (a very infrequent occurrence), is always too near to external "fact" to be moving or convincing. It is only necessary to recall the play woven around the Browning love-story, or a recent play about Byron, or the Brontës, or the many plays about Shakespeare. Immediately the sensitive observer is conscious that the essential spirit of the story has escaped, as indeed it inevitably must, and so would rather return to Browning's own celebration of his love, revealed everywhere in his work, but nowhere directly declared except perhaps in *One Word More* and *Prospice*. Much of Browning's greatness of mind lies in his unwillingness to expose his inner sanctuary to the common gaze. Given to the world its riches must be, since for him they are the revelation of God's goodness and his own assurance of immortality, but always and only in the transmuted, sometimes almost unrecognisable, form which constitutes art.

Similarly, no play has captured the errant quality of Byron's personality, nor the inner truth of his enigmatical and contradictory life, and more is learned of Emily Brontë through her poem, *The Prisoner*, of Shakespeare through *Hamlet*, than any aspiring dramatist, or biographer, can reveal.

So Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris* failed both as art and as a

restorative or means of liberation for its author. It inevitably lacked that power for him because it followed too closely the actual course of his tragic love, and in compiling it he relived in detail every moment of the devastating years. The labour of transmuting it into a true art-form would possibly have healed him, for during the process he would have discovered whatever elements of transcendental beauty or high tragedy it might have held, discovered also its significance in relation to life as a whole, and, as an inevitable result, for his life's work. But he left it stranded in its own pitiful isolation, and it tortured rather than soothed him. The love and the torment remained, as it had been throughout, an experience confined to his solitary ego alone, feeding or starving him according to its course and his own mood, but never recognised as a potential enrichment no matter what the actual results. Only those who understand Humbert Wolfe's words: "Love is greater than the lovers, love is such That all may love and fail and yet be rich,"<sup>1</sup> and in such understanding have learned the deep underlying significance of *love in itself* can hope to overcome the *circumstances* of a tragic love-experience. This the great modern poet Rainer Maria Rilke perfectly understood, believing indeed that the highest kind of love is that which is unrequited, which is content simply to love, and in the mere act of loving find fulfilment. The requited lover he considers on a lower plane altogether, since he is a taker as well as a giver, and giving, not receiving is the supreme act of enrichment.

The life of Swinburne is another notable example of the permanent and in most cases irreparable damage

<sup>1</sup> *Requiem*, The Lovers.



that can be inflicted through love. All the subsequent follies and vices which ruined his life and brought him to final ignominy as a man, though not as a poet, are traceable to the failure of one consuming love, which love and loss *The Triumph of Time* poignantly immortalises :

Had you eaten and drunken and found it sweet

    This wild new growth of the corn and vine,  
This wine and bread without lees or leaven,  
We had grown as gods, as the gods in heaven,  
Souls fair to look upon, goodly to greet,  
    One splendid spirit, your soul and mine.

In the change of years, in the coil of things,

    In the clamour and rumour of life to be,  
We, drinking love at the furthest springs,  
    Covered with love as a covering tree,  
We had grown as gods, as the gods above,  
Filled from the heart to the lips with love,  
Held fast in his hands, clothed warm with his wings,  
    O love, my love, had you loved but me !

There will no man do for your sake, I think,

    What I would have done for the least word said,  
I had wrung life dry for your lips to drink,  
    Broken it up for your daily bread :

Body for body and blood for blood  
As the flow of the full sea risen to flood  
That yearns and trembles before it sink,  
    I had given, and laid down for you, glad and dead.

Yea, hope at highest and all her fruit,

    And time at fullest and all his dower,  
I had given you surely, and life to boot,  
    Were we once made one for a single hour.

But now, you are twain, you are cloven apart,  
 Flesh of his flesh, but heart of my heart ;  
 And deep in one is the bitter root,  
     And sweet for one is the lifelong flower.

To have died if you cared I should die for you, clung  
     To my life if you bade me, played my part  
 As it pleased you—these were the thoughts that stung,  
     The dream that smote with a keener dart  
 Than shafts of love or arrows of death ;  
 These were but as fire is, dust or breath,  
 Or poisonous foam on the tender tongue  
     Of the little snakes that eat my heart.

He was vividly conscious of the irreparable damage to  
 his life :

. . . were you once sealed mine,  
 Mine in the blood's beat, mine in the breath,  
 Mixed into me as honey in wine . . .

. . .  
 I had grown pure as the dawn and the dew . . .

. . .  
 But who now on earth need care how I live ?  
 Have the high gods anything left to give ?  
 Save dust and laurels and gold and sand ?  
     Which goods are goodly ; but I will none.

. . .  
 I will keep my soul in a place out of sight,  
     Far off, where the pulse of it is not heard.

. . .  
 I have hidden my soul out of sight, and said  
     “ Let none take pity on thee, none  
 Comfort thy crying, for lo, thou art dead,  
     Lie still now, safe out of sight of the sun.

Have I not built thee a grave, and wrought  
Thy grave-clothes on thee of grievous thought,  
With soft spun verses and tears unshed."

I shall never be friends again with roses ;  
I shall loathe sweet tunes, where a note grown strong  
Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes,  
As a wave of the sea turned back by song.  
There are sounds where the soul's delight takes fire,  
Face to face with its own desire ;  
A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes ;  
I shall hate sweet music my whole life long.

In *The Rossettis and their Circle* Swinburne's steady degeneration after the failure of his love is clearly traced, while in *The Romantic Agony* Professor Mario Praz makes much of his peculiar vices, and their almost limitless range, but only refers *en passant* to the experience which could have saved him, and which, conversely, sent him headlong on the road to perdition. Professor Praz's sensationally-coloured picture of this often superb pre-Raphaelite poet is not to be recommended except to serious students of psycho-pathology, whose wide and liberal knowledge enables them to assess the situation comparatively equitably, although it remains true that even for such students an understanding of the psychology of the creative artist is vitally important. The creative temperament is so fraught with contradictions and apparent inconsistencies that without a comprehensive knowledge of its peculiarities no adequate judgment can possibly be arrived at. The gravest harm has been done, and continues to be done, both to artists and to their associates, by a totally inadequate understanding of

the artist's psychology. This point cannot be too often or too powerfully stressed, and the question, as I have repeatedly been at pains to insist, is not one of superiority or inferiority in comparison with other individuals, but first and last, only and always, of *difference*. The question of superiority or inferiority is, in any case, not for individuals to decide. In the words of Tchekov, "One would need to be God to decide which are the failures and which are the successes in life." For some reason, and greatly to their own discomfort and perplexity, the majority of people refuse to accept this principle of essential *difference*, and labour always to bring the man of genius in whatever sphere into line with their own level of understanding.

Because of the limitless health-giving power of love it remains true, and pitifully true, since the opportunity so rarely occurs, that there is no moment, however late, when the unhappy victim might not be restored to life :

Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over  
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

And so often, one of the greatest of English poets, Robert Browning, provides the outstanding proof of love's infinite healing power. It would be idle to repeat the well-known story of his love for Elizabeth Barrett, how his vitality and vast capacity for creative loving gently but with unutterable strength drew her from what she herself truly believed to be the verge of the grave, pouring life and love from his own superabundant store into her failing body and curing her of what the doctors had for years agreed was an incurable disease. It may be argued, and perhaps



rightly, that in spite of medical evidence to the contrary her malady was at root functional, and therefore curable by right diagnosis and treatment, but it also remains true that it needed the insight, the love and faith of Robert Browning to achieve what medical science had abandoned as impossible.

Yet even to recognise the power of love is not enough. The urgent problem is to discover how the infinite varieties of disaster and tragedy might be averted—an altogether more difficult matter.

It seems clear that a balanced realisation of the *gravity* of everything connected with love should be inculcated at the outset. A fearless, reverent approach would help to ensure this. But the sense of gravity should never be allowed to outweigh the knowledge of love's beauties and immeasurable joys. This is why I urge a *balanced* view. The realisation of gravity would encourage the vital sense of mutual responsibility, and young people would no longer feel entitled to what they foolishly call "a good time" regardless of the feelings of the other, or others, involved. They would be as careful of the susceptibilities of others as of their own, delicately approaching the most delicate and dangerous of arts. Again, the rôle of love in relation to life as a whole : its meaning, significance and purpose, should be, so far as possible, stressed. I say "so far as possible" advisedly, because man, in his present stage of development, has as yet a very imperfect understanding of the *full* significance of love, and the part it has to play not only in this life but possibly beyond. Here and there thought-pioneers catch glimpses of the mystery and significance, and are called to reveal their intuition : this is the method of all creative progress, and those possessed

of such intuitions are inevitably persecuted, and often temporarily hampered, by the sluggish weight and slug-like motion of the mass-mind looming like a huge bulk of inert grey matter in its path. And because of the transient nature of the glimpses, the pioneers have difficulty in conveying their knowledge in precise words: often they can do little more than throw out frail gossamer-threads of thought for other thinkers to catch and weave into their own creative pattern; often this has to be enough:

Enough that once and again in the flow of the ages  
one or another walks passionately at peace with the  
vision.

But it is "the vision of things that *must be*." <sup>1</sup>

There are also other pioneers, those who might be called the prophets of the flesh, who believed, in varying degrees, what D. H. Lawrence passionately declared <sup>2</sup> and Walt Whitman magnificently understood: that the regeneration of mankind must come through a deeper apprehension of the nature of the physical. <sup>3</sup> Presumably James Joyce might be included in this category, and certainly John Cowper Powys whose *Glastonbury Romance* is one of the epic novels of the twentieth century. Powys understands, sees into, the nature of the physical universe in a way that can only be called mystical. He *becomes* the earth, the roots of the trees gripping the earth, just as Lawrence identifies himself with flowers, birds, beasts, and his great book pulses with passages of super-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* my poem, "Prescience" (*Four Words*, p. 24).

<sup>2</sup> J. Middleton Murry's study, *Son of Woman*, deals penetratingly with this aspect of Lawrence's work.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Walt Whitman's poems: *Starting from Paumanok*, *Song of Myself*, *I Sing the Body Electric*, and many others.

natural beauty. In some mysterious way he himself is embedded in the earth, couched with the earth-mother, his ears attuned to her most intimate secrets. And men and women he sees only as children of earth. For this reason it is irrelevant to discuss the "morality" of *A Glastonbury Romance*; it transcends common morality, brushing it aside as the gods and the elementals do. But—and here the analogy breaks down—though his men and women appear to be amoral earth-children, though he, their creator, sees them thus, yet they themselves must suffer as gods, elementals or animals never could when the power of sex convulses them, which is disastrous, since they are without exception, everyone of his huge company of characters, sex-ridden, sex-obsessed; for them the sexual fulfilment is primary and ultimate, the meaning and justification of their lives. The whole book is saturated with sex, and the characters are unhappily too much children of the world, not truly of the good earth, to take their needs easily: they are tormented, and their conflict, their torment, their obsession, dominates the story from beginning to end.

Mr. Powys is a subtle sexual psychologist. He knows that the flesh *in itself* is innocent, that the danger and the torture comes from human awareness, from the hypersensitive human nerves:

Innocent, neutral, harmless, beautiful, neither good nor evil, is the mortal flesh of men and of beasts and of the grasses of the field (p. 330).

Yes, there is innocence, because the knowledge of good and evil is lacking:

It is in the nerves that all lecheries, all lusts, all passions lie . . . in the nerves and the imagina-

tion. . . . All good springs from the nerves and from the mind. All evil springs from the nerves and from the mind (Ibid.).

Thus Powys understand the roots of war, hinted at by Shakespeare in *Pericles* :

Something in the human mind leaps out with rapturous release when some outrageous event is occurring. Most men live but a half-life, dull, tame, monotonous. The occurrence of something that is outrageously startling . . . stirs such people with a primordial satisfaction (p. 522).

“ Rapturous release.” Why is the human mind so hungry for release? Why is the opportunity for release, no matter how terrible, greeted with rapture? Solely because the majority of human beings are sexually maladjusted and hence frustrated. The most sensitive, the most tormenting of human nerves is twisted, violated, with disastrous results. The universal preoccupation with sex, in whatever form it may be presented, is sufficient evidence of this maladjustment. The lives of those who have achieved the correct balance between sex, love and life in its totality, are differently orientated, so differently that they have little time for, concern with, or interest (apart from scientific interest) in the various perverted sex-diversions which the maladjusted seize upon with pitiful and tragic avidity. War gratifies the perversions of sadism and masochism, apart from the increased opportunities for homo-sexuality (I ignore the obvious increased opportunities for promiscuity, since I am referring only to perversions). But the men who make war, and those who greet it with a sense of rapturous release, have no knowledge of



psychology, abnormal or otherwise, and are thus totally unaware of the deep-rooted reasons for their evil rapture, and equally unaware of the nature and quality of the dangers involved.<sup>1</sup> War will be exterminated only when men have *learned to use the creative impulses* in the various forms in which they appear. So long as these impulses are misunderstood, distorted and diverted they must and will find an outlet in creation's converse, destruction. "The whole creation groans and travails" because the mighty life-impulses are misunderstood. It must not be assumed that physical creation only is the essential; in some, certainly a minority, but a powerful minority, *mental* creation is the one overwhelming need. Beatrice Hinkle admirably stresses this point in her chapter on "The Psychology of the Artist,"<sup>2</sup> although she deals only with the male artist, rather to the detriment of the whole subject, since it is evident that the creative art-impulse in woman involves still deeper complexities and issues, due to her normal preoccupation with creativeness in the *physical* form—a process which in itself and by comparison means but little to the man, who is concerned only with the inception of the process. Therefore when it happens that instead of the passion for physical creativeness a woman appears whose whole life-passion is for creation in the mental sphere, it is understandable that the psychological difficulties and complexities should be intensified, and rarely, if ever, understood, even by the woman herself.<sup>3</sup> It is vital, however, that this quality

<sup>1</sup> Those psychologists who, like Professor McDougall (*Social Psychology*, p. 278) attribute wars only to the acquisitive and possessive instincts have scarcely looked deep enough.

<sup>2</sup> *The Recreating of the Individual*.

<sup>3</sup> This subject is admirably and sympathetically dealt with by Pearl Buck in her novel, *This Proud Heart*, a book which

in certain women should be acknowledged and accepted. For them physical creation is not only entirely unnecessary, but wholly undesired, and of interest only in the sense in which creation and life are vital to all artists. These women, were they capable of absolute honesty (but the difficulty of arriving at the truth in all vital intimate matters lies in the *incapacity*, not simply embarrassed disinclination, for *honesty*, in the great majority of people), would admit that never for one moment of their lives have they desired a child of their own, that in them the maternal instinct as such is non-existent: their creative impulses and needs are totally absorbed in art-creations, and all their "maternal" love given to the children of their minds, their art-productions. For such women physical creativeness is really a deep violation, yet so few are capable of genuine inner honesty that the majority believe that there is for them a need for this creativeness *also*, and in submitting to this fictitious belief they frequently bring disaster on themselves and their families. The children, *because* actually deeply unwanted, are over-loved by the mother, who cannot tolerate her inner apprehension of their true place in her life, which apprehension conflicts powerfully with the artist's intense capacity for love. And apart from this, it would be sin *not* to love the children she is responsible for having brought into the world. This type of loving, a form of compensation for a deep division of the psyche, leads to innumerable psychological troubles and disasters, both in mothers and children. In all human relationships, absolute and unequivocal honesty is the first essential; without this there can never be hope of perfection. should be read by all who are interested in the psychology of the woman-artist.

And it must be clearly understood that perfection in human relationships is no impossible ideal, as so many moralists and teachers affirm. Perfection *here and now* is found when the deep inner laws are recognised, understood and followed, and they can be, and are, understood by the few who know that Jesus, the supreme realist, would never have voiced the behest, "Be ye perfect" if perfection had been an ideal impossible of attainment. The key to the understanding of the laws lies in the words: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." This is the rule, and the result: "All these things shall be added unto you." There is no other way. "Seek ye *first*," not second, or last, when other ways have failed. The search for the Kingdom of God is the one vital, the only finally valuable, search; without it, nothing enduring will be found. The world looks here, looks there, for solutions to the problems tormenting human minds, proposes cures for the ills, which cures prove to be nothing but palliatives, leaving the root-causes untouched, and at last the structure of civilisation totters, and only because the kingdom of this world is sought rather than the kingdom of God. The spiritual laws to which frequent reference is made by all enlightened thinkers are the laws of God's kingdom. These laws are rarely understood, certainly never by the pagan lovers of Mr. Powys's books, their very existence is unknown to them. Moreover, there is a way of "sublimation" equally not understood, with the result that such characters do not develop into men of genuine power. Secular power they may, and often do, attain to, but such power is no more than temporal, and has no permanent influence on human development. I am impelled to quote here an extract from a

letter I received some years ago from a young poet of unusual intellect and acute perception. He had already learned what the majority of men live a whole lifetime without knowing, not only to their own heavy cost, but to the cost of their associates, and indeed of humanity itself. One day it will be recognised that the accumulation of years does not necessarily mean an accumulation of wisdom, or even knowledge. My young poet friend wrote :

I feel that the human passions if distinctive in sheer power in a really distinctive person have a hallowed morality of their own—compared to which a code of ethics is but arbitrary, conscious in the mind, but not “felt on the pulses.” . . . That is, the primal instincts do *not* remain bare and raging below a rational exposition of conduct endeavoured to be adhered to, in spite of, and in opposition to, those instincts, but that the instincts themselves can be elevated and elevated until the ideals of the mind can be drowned and the passions morally sublimated instead. The subject then becomes a man of power, or sanctified passion, in place of a man of ethical standards. . . . It does *not* mean a rejection or a neglect of morals, and a letting-loose of passions. It means a substitution of conscious ethics by sublimated emotional forces, the forces becoming moral in themselves by towering elevation—this means force, or passional energy.<sup>1</sup>

This process, which must presumably be called sublimation, though transmutation is a better, though

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Llewellyn Powys, *Love and Death* : Sanctity is grounded upon passion, and by means of the sublimation of love mortals will challenge the powers of hell.



even so not an adequate, word, must be more generally understood if man is to find liberation from his dangerous passions. Professor Wilson Knight puts it more briefly when he speaks of "aiming to swing over certain powerful human instincts from a destructive to a creative direction." It might safely be said that the problem of transmuting the instincts is the root-problem of humanity. Those which in animals remain necessary become in man a source of potential danger. Self-preservation in the animal becomes in man fear ; parental devotion and sacrifice becomes too often possessive love, itself rooted in fear and a sense of insecurity ; the instinct of pugnacity, allied in the animal to self-preservation, in man leads to aggression and war—by-products of possessiveness—and the huge task of the genuine worker for peace on earth (to be carefully distinguished from the simple "pacifist"), is to teach man to transmute those human instincts which lead to destruction, so that instead of destructive he wills creative activity. But first and last, a proper understanding of love, the root of all creativeness, is essential ; from that vital source all the rest will inevitably flow. Love is one with the spirit of nature itself, over-abundant, over-generous, it might seem (though it must be remembered that Divine Love might be deemed over-generous in its tireless, limitless giving, its infinite patience), content to give and give as nature itself lavishly gives, and in the process mysteriously enriching itself ; it knows nothing of acquisitiveness, possessiveness or jealousy, only the joy of giving and sharing, instinctively knowing that the source, in its ceaseless outpouring and overflowing, continually feeds itself, and can never run dry. It is a blasphemy, no less, to give the name

“ love ” to the many immoral impulses which human beings take pleasure in. The possessiveness of parent, wife, husband, friend, is pure egotism rooted in, and nourished by, fear. No human being can have “ rights ” over another. Parents, especially mothers, like to cherish the belief that the child is their possession simply because they brought its body into existence ; similarly, since the law so decrees, unenlightened married people assume rights over each other’s bodies, and through such profoundly unchristian beliefs assert and enforce those rights, as if the human being were of no more value than a piece of furniture, a loaf of bread, or perhaps, at best, a favourite horse or dog. All these ideas arise through ignorance of the spiritual fact that the human body differs from inanimate property, or from animals, in that it houses some element of the Divine. What would a true realisation of the familiar words of the Catechism mean : “ Children of God and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven ? ” Children of *God*, not of human parents, a point stressed by Jesus in the words “ Call no man father.” Apart from the deeper psychological causes, the predominance of the possessive instincts are largely responsible for war, an inevitable result of man’s unregenerate and unrepentant condition. The possessive impulses are purely destructive ; they seek only to destroy or remove whatever threatens their security. They desire all for themselves, to feed the poisonous egotism of the possessor, thus filling up the grey vacuum of his own being. Conversely, the genuine lover desires only to see the beloved happy, and rising to his greatest heights of achievement, fulfilling himself as a complete human being, *and not necessarily always*—and this is the supreme test of

love—through the lover's own influence or activities. The genuine lover is eager, in all circumstances, to share his own joy in the beloved, and delights to see the object of his love loved and valued by others. Only the mean-minded seek jealously to keep all for themselves, resenting understanding or appreciation of the beloved from others. In a regenerate world, nothing would forge so close a bond between human beings as mutual love for another, and there would be no conflict ; the divine and enduring bond would be the great bond of *love itself*, which transcends individual relationships. Those who as yet fail to understand this, jealously guarding their love and the object of their love, have scarcely advanced beyond the animal stage of development. And those who attribute every relationship between men and women to sexual attraction alone are on precisely the same level, betraying in this gross indecency of thought their own hyper-sexuality and lack of any true moral sense. The enlightened understand, as Professor MacMurray so ably puts it, that

men and women must meet and enter into relationships on the personal level,<sup>1</sup> not as male and female, but as human beings, equally made in the image of God,<sup>2</sup>

and goes on to say :

There is only one proper ground of relationship between any two human beings, and that is mutual friendship. Difference of sex may make the friendship easier or more difficult of achieve-

<sup>1</sup> Professor MacMurray's use of the word "personal" always connotes a relation between *persons*, not the sense of intimate relationship for which it is so often used.

<sup>2</sup> *Reason and Emotion*, p. 134.

ment, *but it cannot make any difference in principle.*<sup>1</sup> . . . Moral relations are dependent on the absolute value of the human being, as a free human spirit, *not as a man or a woman.*<sup>2</sup>

Difficulties arise through lack of understanding both of the nature of love and of Christian and moral values. Always *lack of understanding*—so common, so widespread, so tragic in its results. It seems that in every age only the “saving remnant” is *able* to penetrate further into life’s mysteries and truths, and for that wisdom pays the heaviest price; the rest, the huge majority, remain in this respect unenlightened throughout their earthly lives, and thus cannot be blamed for their monstrous and disastrous follies, any more than an animal, lacking moral sense, can be called wicked. The sense of *absolute* moral or Christian values is almost non-existent, questions of right and wrong being most often simply a matter of expediency. It is preposterous that an age which boasts of its emancipation and freedom of thought should still regard relationships between men and women in one light alone, thus betraying enslavement to the primitive conception of woman as inferior, her sole purpose the complement, chattel and convenience of man. When at last the sacramental, creative understanding of love supplants the old evil traditions, men and women will go forward together in brave, fearless and free comradeship and vital creative activity, fellow-workers and fellow-citizens of the Kingdom of God. Individual love will not be excluded, for that rarer, deeper love must always arise from time to time as a result of the mysterious mutual magnetism of

<sup>1</sup> The *italics* are mine.

<sup>2</sup> *Reason and Emotion*, p. 135.



certain personalities, a phenomenon irrespective of sex, which need not always, even between men and women, develop into sexual love, though it frequently does, and when it does, should inevitably lead to results powerfully creative of good.

To quote H. Fielding Hall :

You must look straight in the face of love, because only so will you acquire understanding and only by understanding can sin, *which is the want of love*,<sup>1</sup> be conquered. Love is not sin, neither love physical nor love spiritual ; love is truth and immortality and wisdom. Only through physical love shall you learn to comprehend physical things, only from spiritual love shall you learn spiritual things. And as spirit must be manifested in flesh you cannot divide one from another. Love is never sin except when misused. Wisdom and immortality come through love.<sup>2</sup>

Enlightened thinkers are one in such affirmations. Kagawa believes implicitly that the ultimate redemption of mankind can and will come, but only through the power of love. And as the true mystics always stress the necessity for unity, so the highest individual love, leading to the fullest understanding of love as the great law of life, must come through a perfect fusion of the spiritual and the physical, which, as Fielding Hall says, alone teaches the secrets of both. When these truths are grasped in their entirety, and men have learned through infinite suffering, infinite courage, infinite patience, infinite endurance, to live by love alone, the barriers between earth and heaven will dissolve in light, and the great god Eros will have found incarnation.

<sup>1</sup> The *italics* are mine.

<sup>2</sup> *The World Soul*, pp. 140-1.

## CONCLUSION

"That which happens at the quick of a man's life will finally have its full expression in his body."—D. H. LAWRENCE, *Phœnix*.

"The chances against any new and splendid birth seem multitudinous, the old world will slay it if it can, yet that birth inevitably occurs, that birth is mysteriously guarded, and the new life springs strong-limbed in death's despite."—G. WILSON KNIGHT, *The Christian Renaissance*.

THE Gospel according to St. John ends with some rather strange words :

And there are many things also which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

The ending of any vital book, especially the last words of the book, are always important, because of the making of certain books there can be no end, the final word is never really written ; in all creation, the product represents a fraction only of the thought, the emotion, the experience, which has all worked to produce it ; the ultimate result of the vast mass of experience, emotion, thought, is in sternest fact only an infinitesimal part of the whole. The creator is himself scarcely conscious of all that has gone to the making of his work, neither can he say how he knows that now it is as complete as he can make it, and so can well be ended. This applies to every work of art. There is no true end to any picture, any sculpture, music, poem, or book. Always something more

might have been expressed. In itself, the subject, whatever it may be, is limitless, because every work of art is a fragment of life, itself limitless. Small wonder then that St. John "ended" his record of Jesus's life with a plain statement of this awareness. Jesus had "the words of eternal life"; such words can never be enclosed in one short book. Neither can a book about reality ever be ended—and reality is God, and God Love, "L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle."

So I write my conclusion burdened with the knowledge that only a minute portion of the whole has been expressed, only a few signposts erected, a few fragile threads of thought thrown out for others to catch on to and weave into their own pattern. But since the warp and the weft of the pattern here woven themselves inevitably hold words of eternal life, they cannot and will not be disregarded: in a world sick and groaning for the only food that can save it from starvation and death the meaning must be heeded, even though "the chances against any new and splendid birth seem multitudinous." The world has existed too long on a death-philosophy; soon there must be a movement towards life, and life is love, because love is creativeness, and creativeness life. Jesus came that men might have *life*, and life more abundant than any they had hitherto known, and because He offered them life they rewarded Him with death. But death cannot destroy the great principle of life, of which truth the Resurrection is the magnificent asservation, the supreme assurance that no matter how strong the forces of death, life will eventually conquer "springing strong-limbed in death's despite." And the resurrection of Jesus, the Ascension and finally the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, declare that life in its

totality is not material, but spiritual. The material body of Christ died on the Cross, but the Life was deathless.

When Ouspensky in *A New Model of the Universe* remarks that the New Testament is a very strange book written for those who have already a certain degree of understanding, he states a deep and far-reaching truth which the theologians in the main have failed to grasp :

Every phrase, every word, contains hidden ideas, and it is only when one begins to bring these ideas to light that the power of this book and its influence on people, which has lasted for two thousand years, becomes clear (p. 150).

The meaning of these ideas is brought to light in ways the closest academic inspection and study cannot reveal. Such study may clarify historical problems, and reveal points of practical importance and value, but the *inner meaning* can never be discovered by these methods. Which is why Ouspensky continually affirms that "the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the few," which teaching, he says, runs all through the New Testament. And this affirmation does not necessarily conflict with the doctrine of the possibility, indeed, necessity, of general salvation, or with the Quaker belief in the Inner Light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The answer lies in the parable of the sower. The seed is broadcast freely, but unless it is tended, unless infinite labour and care is expended on the growth of the seed, opposing influences will destroy the life. Therefore the fostering of the Inner Light lies always with the individual; it can be dimmed and even eventually extinguished; the gifts of God are not given without qualification,



certain conditions are imposed, certain laws must be learned and obeyed ; salvation is not inevitable or automatic, just as immortality itself has to be desired and *attained* ; it is offered liberally and without exception, but not as a free gift, a point made admirably in Professor Simpson's book *The Attainment of Immortality*. Again, Ouspensky remarks that

John the Baptist emphasised with extraordinary power the idea that the Kingdom of Heaven is attained only by a few who deserve it (p. 165).

The approaches to ultimate Truth are limitless, and of infinite variety. It has often been said that were Christ to return to earth He would marvel at the many temples, the many religions, built and created in His name, and would possibly scarcely understand the varying and various doctrines there proclaimed, would certainly not recognise them as progeny of His own simple, yet in practice infinitely complex, teaching. He would certainly marvel at the apparent necessity for so much variety and complexity, doctrine and dogma, when He Himself had plainly said, " *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.*" No less would He marvel at the misunderstanding and neglect of His words :

A new commandment give I unto you, That ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.<sup>1</sup>

And, judged by this standard, how many disciples would He find ?

Eric Gill, with his unfailing good humour, yet with the supreme integrity that distinguished him both as a

<sup>1</sup> Gospel according to St. John xiii, 34-5.

man and a great Christian, remarks in his *Autobiography* :

“ They’re all Catholics round here,” they told me when I went to Preston—“ you wouldn’t know if you weren’t told,” and I may add, when I was told I could hardly believe it . . . and, speaking of England as a whole, the same thing must be said, there isn’t the slightest sign that there is a Christian man or woman in the country. There is not. “ My Kingdom is not of this world.” Dear Lord, yes, I know. But that is really my trouble. . . . Anyone would think this world is exactly your kingdom, so little sign is there that any of your followers thinks anything else (p. 199).

Throughout his book, as throughout his life, he pleads for the sacramental conception of life and work, and contends that the disasters of our present so-called civilisation are solely due to the secularisation and hence inevitable degradation of human life. *Only* a comprehensive realisation of sanctity and dignity can save us from utter destruction. This is really the message of the saints, the prophets, the poets of all time ; the tragedy is that their message has never been heard, and men continue to trust to false gods as ignorantly as the worshippers of Baal in the time of Elijah, while, on the other hand, the “ two and seventy jarring sects ” continue to search for truth in their many and diverse ways, dismissing with scant charity the methods of other schools of thought, which in itself betrays a profound ignorance of the law that on earth absolute Truth is nowhere known ; in spite of the many rival claims and vehement assertions, no single body, no single being, can legitimately claim to be the

repository of final Truth. And it rarely seems to occur to the jarring sects that their unreadiness to work together for the common good in itself breaks the great fundamental law of unity. There is indeed

no reason why the religious mysticism of the Upanishads and the positive ethical concepts of Christianity should be regarded as alternatives rather than as mutually complementary elements in an organic whole.<sup>1</sup>

Those who understand this are commonly dismissed by the strictly institutional religions as heretics, but there is no evidence that Christ so much as mentioned the word heresy, nor laid down any rules concerning it. “*By this* shall all men know that ye are My disciples”—by allegiance to the law of love, which law knows no distinction of creed, class, or race, and through implicit obedience to this law, itself the law of unity, men invariably attain to the peace which comes through unity alone. Meanwhile, the ignorant, those who live by the laws of destruction and death, impose their evil wills on the nations, and the people are too weakened, by generations of frustration and starvation, to protest, and submit to death rather than assert themselves in even a feeble effort for life. They desire life, they desire, in the deepest recesses of their souls, love, congenial work, security, and sufficient peace to ensure these conditions, yet they are too impotent to assert their legitimate human rights, and this impotence is due to the starvation, the frustration and failure at the *quick* of their lives. This failure and pitiful maladjustment locks up the vital life-

<sup>1</sup> R. G. Milburn, *The Religious Mysticism of the Upanishads*, p. 91,

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<sup>1</sup> R. G. Milburn, *The Religious Mysticism of the Upanishads*, p. 91.

essences *within* the personality, where, having no safe and sane outlet, they ferment and fester, breeding innumerable poisons and weakening the whole self. Conversely, a proper understanding of these forces, and of their value and use, would cleanse and liberate, releasing the self for healthful and vital creative activity, sweetening, lightening and enriching.

At every moment the results of our death-philosophy bring horror, destruction and world-wide suffering. The time has come, is indeed long overdue, for men to look deeply into the *roots* of these agonies, using all the accumulated knowledge revealed through psychology in its many branches, the various beliefs underlying spiritual healing, mysticism, Eastern philosophies and methods, and various creeds too often summarily dismissed, medical science, and, above all, Christianity. Only an embracing, catholic approach can ever hope to extract from these apparently conflicting schools of knowledge the core of truth hidden in them all. Generosity, liberality, tolerance, are essentials without which there can be no progress, though this must never be allowed to deteriorate into laxity, the danger always latent in a widely tolerant attitude. But, paradoxically it may seem, *genuine* tolerance never conflicts with quite rigid fundamental moral principles. The fundamentals remain; the ground-work is built on rock, while the methods of building may all be considered with flexible sympathy.

From this thoughtful search into the deeply-hidden causes of our ills, two factors of immense magnitude will emerge: the imperative need for a religious background, and the almost equally pressing necessity for an understanding of the philosophy of love. Love is the only enduring power, the one faith that moves

mountains, the dynamic through which all civilisation in the true sense, all social improvement, all genuine reform, all serenity, all security, all creativeness springs. Hatred, force, and violence may appear to have brought about many revolutionary results, but the lesson of history demonstrates the purely temporary nature of those results. The man of power, of action, appears to achieve more than the man of wisdom, but it is the man of wisdom who *permanently* changes the course of human life. Only the power of the mind, and the spirit underlying mind, finally influences human development, not the sensational, revolutionary acts of the man of temporal power, although it is true that he may temporarily radically affect the course of events. But eventually he is left with no more than a ghostly existence between the pages of a history-book, while the saint, the sage, the prophet, the poet, live eternally, in no danger of death, fertilising men's minds and perpetually creating new life.

Through the loss of true values, the dignity of statesmanship has degenerated into mere political power, and this power into despotism. The ideal of Pericles, based primarily on a concern for the *spiritual* welfare of the people, is totally lost. The nobility of the ideal can be revived only through a positive creative faith in the purpose of life and the destiny of man, which faith will be born only of a vital Christianity, wedded to a profound acceptance of love, Eros, as "the Lord and Giver of Life." Neither will prove creative without the other, because Eros without the controlling influence of religion is rebellious and dangerous, and religion without the life-giving influence of Eros weak and ineffectual.

The thesis propounded in Nicolas Berdyaev's thoughtful study, *The Meaning of History*, supports the view that history is no mere record of events affecting and modifying the destinies of nations, but rather a reflection of some vast cosmic drama, an age-long process of redemption :

The terrestrial destiny is predetermined by the celestial, in which the tragedy of illumination and redemption takes place through the divine passion, and that tragedy determines the process of illuminating world history.

No lesser view can help us to endure the disasters and destructions of our time, accepting the mysterious rhythm of destruction and creation, death and birth, knowing that death is never the final answer.

The statement of the saints, the prophets, the poets, has always been : " We have seen a vision of heaven, and we want no one to be excluded." The vision is love.



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